CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

The Beaver

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2002 $4.95

Hallowe'en Duo:
Bodysnatchers & Ghostbusters

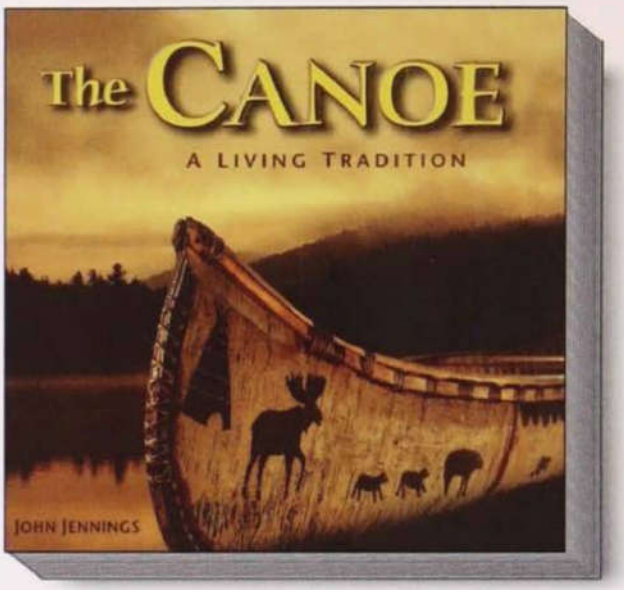
Jack Turner's War

Benjamin Lett:
Rebel Terrorist

Bringing Bison Back

A Stunning New Book on the History of Canoes

The CANOE
A LIVING TRADITION
by John Jennings



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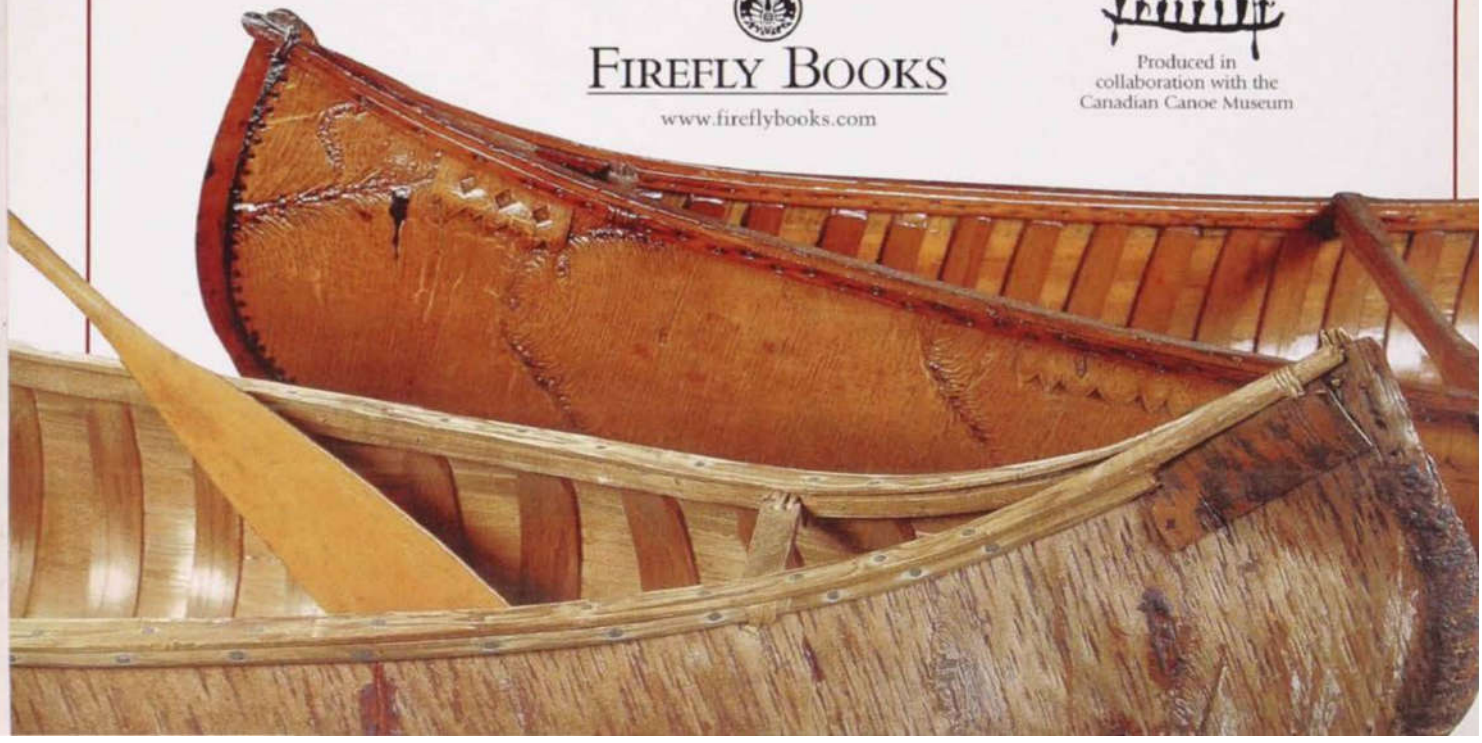

The Beaver

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2002 VOL. 82:5

FEATURES

10 **Benjamin Lett, Rebel Terrorist**
by Chris Raible
The man who blew up Brock's monument.

16 **Bison: Back from the Brink**
by Bill Burns
Luck and perseverance restore the monarch of the plains.

23 **The Ghostbuster**
by Robert Damon Schneck
Psychic shenanigans embroil a Nova Scotia town.

28 **Anatomically Incorrect**
by Matthew Rankin
Montreal's invasion of the bodysnatchers.

33 **Trading Talk**
by Ann Chandler
The rise and fall of Chinook Jargon.

36 **Jack Turner's War**
by Susan Fisher
Forbidden photographs from the trenches.

43 **The Monarch and the Maple**
by Michael Westaway McCue
A royal visit inspires an enduring symbol.

COLUMNS

6
Explorations
Five brothers from Brantford

51
Encounter
Marie-Anne Lagimodière

54
Christopher Moore
Bennett's B.C.

DEPARTMENTS

2
Letters
Wheels of fortune

4
Currents
School days
Romance of the rails
Right royal website

45
Reviews
Sail away
Legally Louis
In Oz

49
Moment
Frederick Banting's idea

53
Artifact
Norseman CF-SAM

PLUS

52
The Society
Governor General's Award finalists

56
Album
Deer hunters

On the cover: Detail of photograph of Jack Turner in France, 1917. Prince Edward Island Archives and Records Office.

Letters

Wheels of fortune

The photo of Benton Neff's Steam Buggy [August/September 2002] caught my eye because I remember my father telling me that he had watched him build it. Harold Hesler was born and raised in a house on the west bank of the Welland Canal in what was then the village of Humberstone (now the northern part of Port Colborne). "Bent" Neff's machine shop was located halfway between my father's home and the school he attended as a young boy. Neff let him hang around the shop after school. During the winter months, he laid out a rink for the neighbourhood kids on his property near the shop, and it was there that my father and his brothers and sisters learned to skate on blades fashioned by Neff. In 1910, when my father was sixteen, he left school and got a job as a junior clerk at the branch of the Royal Bank of Canada in Welland, a seven-mile train ride from Humberstone. My father rode the train to and from work every day until the Grand Trunk went on strike. In those days, if you didn't show up for work you lost your job, and interruptions in public transportation were no excuse. But Bent Neff also made bicycles, and he came to my father's rescue by lending him one for the duration of the strike. Harold Hesler kept his job at the bank and eventually became one of the senior executives at its head office in Montreal, which is where he met my mother. I wonder where (if any place) I would be today were it not for Benton Neff's mechanical genius and generosity.

William Hesler, Q.C.
Westmount, Quebec

The *Beaver* welcomes readers' comments. E-mail us at <cnhs@historysociety.ca> or write to *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

Frank & mike

I have seen the historical photo of J. Frank Willis before [August/September, p.20], but did not remember the story behind it. I knew it was a great feat, however, by looking at the microphone. I am a technician that used that kind of microphone in the thirties. It was certainly not meant for a walk in the bush.

Willis certainly knew what he had to face in leaving Halifax with that double-button carbon microphone and few gadgets (and certainly two good technicians). It can be seen from the picture that the microphone is suspended by small springs. These were necessary since those microphones were very noisy when moved or vibrated. Hooking that microphone to a convenient line in record time to feed seven hundred radio stations all over the continent was a great feat. A thousand nervous technicians awaited Willis's first breath.

Jake Roulo
Senneterre, Quebec

Hail Emma

I am writing in response to your article "Soldier Girl: The Emma Edmonds Story" [August/September 2002]. I am sixteen years old, and my summer job, which I love, is at Fort George, in Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario, where I portray a soldier of the Forty-First Regiment. I often receive remarks from tourists in reference to the fact that I am a girl, and that there were not any girl soldiers. I would like to say thank you. Because of your wonderful article I can now simply tell people that I am paying respect to the hundreds of women like Emma Edmonds who pretended to be men in order to join the army.

Rosanne Waters
Welland, Ontario

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The Beaver *Canada's History Magazine* (ISSN 0005-7517), founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay Company, is published bimonthly by Canada's National History Society, #478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Phone: (204) 988-9300. Fax: (204) 988-9309. Toll Free 1-800-816-6777. E-mail: <cnhs@historysociety.ca> Member Services E-mail: <beaver@historysociety.ca> World Wide Web site: <http://www.beavermagazine.ca>

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Advertising Representative: **Michael Wile**, 5502 Atlantic Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 1G4 Canada. Phone: (902) 429-4454 Fax: (902) 425-0166 E-mail: <michaelwile@historysociety.ca>

Annual Subscription (6 issues): Canada, $27.50 (includes GST). Residents of Manitoba, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia add $1.80 on a one-year subscription. Please add $4 a year for U.S. orders and $6 a year for foreign orders. Single copy price: $4.95. Subscribe by phone, fax, mail, e-mail, or through our website: <http://www.beavermagazine.ca> GST Registration Number: 13868 1408 RT

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Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes to The Beaver Magazine, #478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T6. PAP Registration No. 09708. Canadian Publication Agreement No. 40063001.

U.S. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Beaver Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271–0329.

Second class postage paid at Winnipeg.

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Issued September 2002

Printed in Canada on recycled paper

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program and the Canada Magazine Fund toward our mailing and editorial costs.

The Brownlee affair

I WAS SURPRISED that Douglas A. Johnston's article "Seduction and the Law" [June/July 2002] made no mention of *MacMillan v. Brownlee*, an Alberta action for seduction in the early 1930s. At the time it caused quite a stir in the press and resulted in some startling headlines. This was because the defendant was the premier of Alberta and the plaintiff, I believe, was employed in the premier's office. I don't recall the outcome or the legal issues, if any, although I think the case did get to the Alberta Court of Appeal.

Sylvan F. Sommerfeld
Ottawa, Ontario

EDITOR'S NOTE Vivian MacMillan was a junior stenographer in the office of Premier John Edward Brownlee when she and her father, A.D. MacMillan, filed a seduction charge against the premier. The case went to trial in June 1934. The jury found in favour of MacMillan, but Justice W.C. Ives overruled the jury and dismissed its verdict. In September 1934, the Alberta Court of Appeal upheld Ives's judgment, but in March 1937, the Supreme Court of Canada restored the jury's verdict. MacMillan was awarded $10,000 plus costs. Brownlee, who had resigned as a result of the scandal, appealed to the judicial committee of the Privy Council, but it upheld the Supreme Court decision.

For more, see *Talk to My Lawyer! Great Stories of Southern Alberta's Bar and Bench*, by James H. Gray, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987; also: <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/premier/jebrownlee.html>.

Sentimental journey

IT WAS WITH MORE THAN ORDINARY INTEREST that I read "In the Footsteps of David Thompson" [June/July 2002]. Not because I taught Canadian history in the B.C. school system for more than thirty years, but because I, three other teachers, and a group of high-school students from Golden, B.C. made this same trek thirty-seven years ago, over the Victoria Day weekend in 1965. Unlike David Thompson's party, we traveled east from the Columbia River up the Blaeberry River, across the Great Divide, and down to the Banff-Jasper Highway, a long way to hike in rugged conditions.

The photo shows our group posing where we thought the Great Divide was. Water started flowing east instead of west. I am far left in the back row (and not as short as I appear, since I set the timer on my camera and ran around to find the others standing on a log with no room for me).

For the first half of the journey I recall we were excited by the adventure, the scenery, and, at least for some of us, the historical significance of the route. The last day, however, was pure drudgery, carrying heavy, old-fashioned packs and in some cases wearing inappropriate boots and clothing. The blisters on the feet of the fellow front right in the photo were bleeding so badly he took off his boots and walked barefoot the last twenty miles. I carried both his and my packs. Oh, to be thirty years old again!

I haven't had any contact with either the other teachers or the students since our journey, but I expect they all have as many vivid memories of it as I do. Historically it was of no importance; as one of life's experiences it was great.

Richard Frogge, Kamloops, British Columbia

Myth-conceptions

ERIC GIBSON'S ARTICLE, "The King of the Klondike and the Queen of Romania," [June/July 2002] does little to illuminate the man and his times, and repeats many of the inaccuracies and misconceptions that have become the concretions of Joe Boyle's story.

The contention, for example, that Boyle was unable to arrange a bout between the Australian heavyweight Frank Slavin and the reigning world heavyweight champion, John L. Sullivan, is spurious. Slavin's partnership with Boyle was not established until 1896, well after Slavin's bout with Peter Jackson at the National Sporting Club in London on May 30, 1892. The assertion that Boyle, with "his new rank [of Honourary Lieutenant Colonel] ... went to London to petition the British War Office," is at variance with documentary evidence. Joe left the Yukon on July 14, 1916, to meet with his English backers because his enterprise, the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company, was in financial difficulties. After arriving in London he met Sam Hughes, Canada's minister of militia and defence; in recognition for Boyle's having raised and financed the Yukon Machine Gun Company in 1914, Hughes approved Joe's honourary rank, which was gazetted on September 21, 1916.

Russian sources provide no confirmation that Boyle "knew" Lenin or that the two ever met. On the other hand, following the Bolshevik's seizure of power, documents confirm that Boyle travelled between Moscow and Jassy armed with a pass authorized by Trotsky.

Nor did the War Office dispatch Boyle to Russia "to sort out the ailing railway system." He went at the behest of the American Society of Engineers in London to assess and report upon the transportation situation. Following his major effort in clearing the Moscow knot, a bottleneck of abandoned, damaged, and destroyed railway rolling stock paralyzing the city's marshalling yards, Boyle retrieved the Romanian archives and paper currency – not gold reserves and the Crown jewels – sent to Russia for safekeeping following Bucharest's disastrous entry into the War in August 1916.

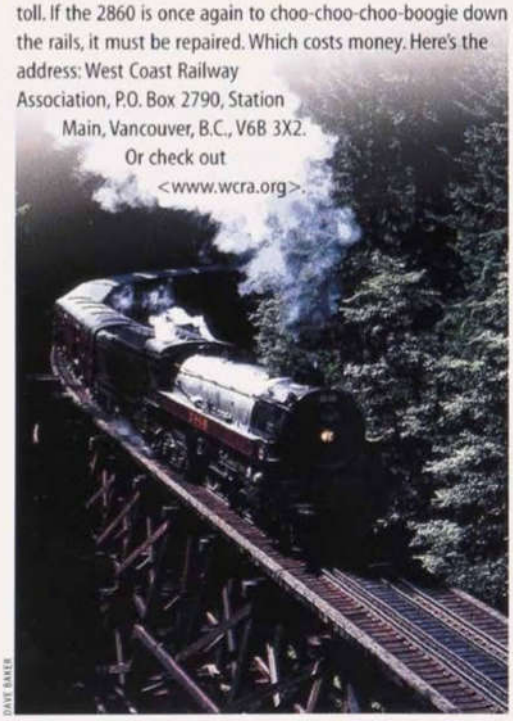
The royal family spent the summer in Bicaz, a Carpathian village, not on the Black Sea. The Black Sea littoral had been occupied by Central Power forces since the autumn of 1916, as was much of the Russian area by Bolshevik insurgents following the Revolution. Marie had nothing to do with the planning or execution of Boyle's fateful flight, or Romania's decision in January 1918 to occupy Kishinev. Nor was Joe ever created Duke of Jassy. That title, as well as the designation Duke of Bucharest, were concocted by the British press after the war when Joe returned to England.

William Rodney
Victoria, British Columbia

The Continuing Saga of the Romance of the Rails

Once it carried King George VI and Queen Elizabeth across Canada in their celebrated prewar tour. Once it powered trains through the difficult terrain between Vancouver and Revelstoke. Once it carried 100,000 passengers a year from Vancouver through the rugged mountainous confines of Howe Sound to Squamish. But, no more. The Royal Hudson 2860 locomotive, until recently the only steam locomotive in scheduled mainline service in North America, no longer plies the rails. In need of major maintenance, it spent the summer parked at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish, fifty-six kilometres north of Vancouver, which is okay in a museological sort of way. You could visit it. But the real romance of the rails is in the sound, the sight, and the feel of a superb machine moving through space and time. Little wonder that the Royal Hudson Preservation Fund seeks not merely to maintain the locomotive's exoskeleton for people to gaze at, but to actually get the thing up and running again.

One of the few remaining of the original sixty-five Hudson steam locomotives made for the CPR between 1929 and 1940, the Royal Hudson 2860 – so named for its service in the 1939 royal visit – reached speeds of 144 kilometres per hour and cut cross-country travel time dramatically. But diesel locomotives did better than that, and by the 1960s the Hudsons, including the 2860, were retired to the scrap yard. The 2860 sat in storage until 1974 when it was brought back to do the Squamish excursions and serve the tourist economy. But time takes its toll. If the 2860 is once again to choo-choo-choo-boogie down the rails, it must be repaired. Which costs money. Here's the address: West Coast Railway Association, P.O. Box 2790, Station Main, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 3X2. Or check out <www.wcra.org>.



DAVE BAKER

National Historic Site watch

LONG POINT REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

There are more than eight hundred and fifty officially designated national historic sites in Canada, with new ones coming on board all the time. Here's one of the latest to get the requisite plaque: The Backhouse Mill in Port Rowan, Ontario, 150 kilometres southwest of Toronto. Why? It's believed to be Canada's oldest continually operating grist mill, grinding grain to make flour since 1798. Might be grist for your next history-on-the-highway travel adventure.

Website of the month

Since we're featuring on page 43 a story on the first official visit by a member of the Royal Family to Canada (Edward, Prince of Wales, 1860) and since Canada from October 4 to 15 is to experience the latest royal visit by the current monarch, it seemed like not a completely irrelevant idea to turn your readerly attention to this website: <**www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/royalvisit2002/**>. While providing details of the Queen's visit this fall to Nunavut, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick, it also features the history of Elizabeth's relationship with Canada, biographical material, a history of previous royal visits, as well as downloadable video and audio clips, and a seventeen-question quiz that can probably be successfully answered only by dedicated monarchists. For example: In Northern Ontario in 1959, Her Majesty wore something far from the expected tiara and gown. What was it? [a] a boa and cape, [b] a pit helmet and dust coat, or [c] a wool tuque and mittens. (No prize for the correct answer.) *Our* question, however, is this: Whatever happened to that amphibious "penguin" car presented as a gift by Lester B. and Maryon Pearson at 24 Sussex Drive in 1964? Over to you, Ma'am.

Take the day off

October 9: To honour the arrival 125 years ago in Winnipeg of the Countess of Dufferin, Western Canada's first steam locomotive. Do the locomotion.

October 14: To mark the opening of Parliament forty-five years ago by Queen Elizabeth II, the first reigning monarch to do so in Canada. Repeat the following mantra: "My husband and I ..."

November 16: To celebrate the 1606 performance in Port Royal of Marc Lescarbot's *Le Théâtre de Neptune*, the first play written and performed in Canada. Clap.

November 18: To commemorate Canada's adoption in 1883 of standardized hour-long time zones, advocated by Sir Sandford Fleming. Note that it's *still* half an hour later in Newfoundland.

Laurel

Two years ago it was Markham, Ontario. Last year it was Victoria, B.C. This year it's – drum roll, please – Saint John, New Brunswick. What is *it*? It is the Prince of Wales Prize presented annually by the Heritage Canada Foundation to a local government that has shown exemplary commitment to the preservation of its built heritage. Saint John won this year's prize for its long record of achievement in preserving its heritage buildings and historic districts. Canada's oldest incorporated city (1785), Saint John has the most intact collection of nineteenth-century commercial architecture in the country. In 1982, the city designated for heritage preservation a twenty-block area representing the neighbourhood of the original city as laid out by the Loyalists, and it's been persisting in heritage policies and programs ever since. Well done, Saint John.

Everything is connected

Perhaps it's the Pope having been in Canada recently, but a number of Catholic-linked history items have crossed the Currents desk in one of those strange episodes of synchronicity that make you wake up and take notice and confess all your sins. First of all, we were alerted to the anniversary of St. Michael's College in Toronto, an educational institution founded by the Basilian Fathers 150 years ago and eventually federated with the University of Toronto. Lots of famous Canadians have passed through St. Michael's, such as writer Morley Callaghan and prime-minister-in-waiting Paul Martin. But what caught our eye was St. Michael's hiring in 1946 writer and theorist Marshall McLuhan to teach English. McLuhan, exploring the effect of communications media on society, wrote such seminal works as *The Medium Is the Message* and metamorphosed from obscure Canadian academic to planetary pop icon.

Which leads us to *McLuhan's Wake*, a documentary film by Toronto's Kevin McMahon, scheduled for airing on TVO in mid-November. Not about a post-funeral gathering, the film posits that we are all following in the theorist's wake, obliged to confront the questions that confronted him: What does technology do to people and their environments? Who's in control? How do we retain our humanity in the face of faceless mass communications systems? Etc.

Faith may be one way to counter the atomization of mass society: McLuhan was a Catholic convert, which somehow leads us back to Catholic institutions, this time Saint Mary's University in Halifax, the oldest English-speaking university in Canada established by the Roman Catholic Church, which is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year. (Canada Post even issued a stamp in its honour and a pictorial history is scheduled for publication this fall.) To coincide with the 200th anniversary of Saint Mary's, Halifax's Neptune Theatre is mounting in November *Blood on the Moon*, a play written and performed by Pierre Brault that deals with the aftermath of the 1868 assassination of Father of Confederation Thomas D'Arcy McGee who, though anticlerical in his youth, was a devoted Catholic in later life. The play recreates the arrest, incarceration, trial, and execution of James Patrick Whelan, McGee's alleged assassin; the audience becomes the jury; and the justice system at the time of Confederation is revealed to be very different than it is today.

Well, one thing leads to another. Everything – weirdly – is connected. St. Marshall might consider it so.

School days (and nights)

Fraught as the topic of native residential schools is in this country, it hasn't prevented the National Archives of Canada from mounting an exhibition dedicated to the period between 1892 and 1969 when the government of Canada in cooperation with five Christian denominations established off-reserve educational institutions. Entitled *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools*, the exhibit, on at the NAC until February 3 (with travelling and virtual exhibitions to come), doesn't directly address the current headlines of physical and sexual abuse. The exhibit consists of some hundred photographs culled from the National Archives, church archives, and private family albums, and such photographs of course don't document the prurient aspects of some of residential school life. Instead, we see pictures of children and their teachers smiling and posing for the camera – not unlike any typical classroom of the period, only the children are First Nations and the teachers Euro-Canadian. The suggestion of the dark side of residential school is more subtle. Some pictures depict the fences that were used to keep native parents, thought to be a bad influence, away from their children; others, juxtaposed, contrast the ingenuous six-year-old entering school with his or her "civilized" self graduating a decade later. However, despite the unhappy aspects, the exhibition – which has been mounted in cooperation with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Aboriginal Healing Charitable Association – respects the complexities of the residential experience. Pictures also show graduates who went on to great success; others recognize that the instructors, by and large, believed they were being progressive and responsible in assimilating native youth. Some 100,000 to 150,000 aboriginal children – 20 percent of First Nations population – are estimated to have attended residential school. We're now a generation away from the experience. Part of the purpose of the exhibition, as indicated in the names of the sponsoring bodies, is to encourage today's children to ask, and parents to respond to, questions about the past, and thus further the necessary healing.

BUD GLUNZ, NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA / NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA PA-134110

Five Brothers from Brantford

The nursing sisters made such a fuss over me ... I was afraid some of them were going to kiss me, awful predicament for a wounded man to be in. It took me about a week before I could look at one without getting hot around the collar.

There were their photographs. There were the letters laid out on the bed in my great-aunt's spare room. There was the unforgiving tinge of anger in my father's eyes when he spoke of the deaths of his four uncles, and there were always, always tales of the pranks those uncles would get up to. Yet I never connected with them when I was young. They were strangers. Those men were history, not family.

It's a great old war all right and sometimes it makes you wonder how you ever got through some of the places you've been in.

There were eight brothers in that family. Five went to fight in the First World War and four did not survive the experience. It was decades later that I saw their war letters laid out on their sister's bed, more than seven hundred of them. There were letters from their mother, from their aunt, from their cousins, from the five brothers themselves, from their commanding officers, from strange women in France, and from the King of England, the standard letters of condolence. Yet I never connected. I had read many of the letters and looked at the faces gazing across at me from under their military hats. But their reality seemed unfathomable. It was too long ago.

Seven of the author's great-uncles.
Reg and Graham did not enlist; of the five who did, only Arthur survived.

Then I lost a cousin to AIDS. Peter was in his twenties when he died. A lot of young men in the arts community were dying. This must have been what it was like, I thought, when so many men never returned from the First World War. My father's uncles had also been killed in their prime. As with AIDS there must have been what I called "the absence."

Perhaps it is because I am an actor that I can only connect with it if I live it. And through Peter's death I lived, a little, through the deaths of my four great-uncles, George, Joe, Jack, and Harold. Now my journey could begin. It was after Peter's death that I decided to write a play based on the First World War letters and the lost brothers. I called the play *The Lost Boys*.

The seven hundred letters were an abandoned mine – each shaft, each gallery, each level obstructed and crumbling with time. There was only one person in my family who remembered the men firsthand. But he had been very young. So I had no living memories to guide me. But I knew that to live the lives I had to map the mine. As

I read the letters, I sketched on a roll of paper the war-life of each brother: when enlisted, when shipped out, when in the trenches, when out, when wounded, when returned, when on leave, when dead. I laid their lives out beside each other on my paper. Knowing when they were together on leave in England led me to one gallery. Knowing who visited who in the hospital led me to another. Knowing who visited George in hospital when he had venereal disease, yet had written his mother that it was his feet that were bad, led me to another. Knowing who fought in the battle of Passchendaele, who fought at Sanctuary Wood, who marched through Ypres at each stage of that town's destruction, led me to another gallery. Down and down I went. Knowing the quality of mud in Flanders made sense of George's words: *"This Belgium mud is something fierce ..."* Knowing that his friends had drowned in it gave it even more sense.

Knowing there were artifacts in my family – German revolvers, buttons, and German shoulder straps – made sense of Jack:

> *The shoulder straps are easy enough to get, both off the live ones and the others. One officer didn't want to give me his, but I used a little 'perswasion' and he took out his knife and he cut them off for me. The 'perswasion' stuff comes from the ammunition dumps every day.*

Jack and George and Joe and Harold had an aunt who lived in England during the war. Her letters were among the seven hundred. Through her eyes I saw how quickly they were aging, how filthy they sometimes were, how they needed someplace like home, how severe had been their wounds, how their pranks continued, and how they were loved. The mine went deeper. I had left the light of the present day far above to walk in the spaces of their lives. Gallery after gallery opened to me. Events did not lead me now, emotion did. Feelings appeared unseen in the deceptive day-to-day matters of each letter. The mine was endless and I was now performing my play *The Lost Boys*.

Opinions expressed in Explorations are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the *Beaver*.

The eyes looking across at me from their military hats were no longer unfathomable great-uncles. They were more like my brothers.

An actor absorbs character through language. Now the characters were my family. By uttering their words each night, speaking their rhythms, their turns of phrase, their images, their preoccupations, I was being spoken to. George was domestic. George wrote of where they slept, how they slept, where they washed, how cold it was, how they huddled for warmth round the fire in the barns where they were billeted. George always finished his letters, *"Heaps and heaps of love to all."* Joe spoke to me of women, the *"Queens,"* the girls, the clubs, the nights out at the theatre in London, and about who would get married to which girl at home when all the brothers returned. Jack used no euphemisms for death, only the phrase *"to get it."* It was no surprise that it was Jack who sent the shoulder straps and the revolvers. It was no surprise that Jack said, *"You ask me if I like the Hun or rather do I hate the Hun? Well if you want a straight answer, when you get to Heaven you ask the Hun because they are all labeled 'Gott Mitt Uns' and every chance I get I send them on their way to Gott."* Jack had tried to attend Communion even while in the trenches. I imagined Jack learning that every German soldier's belt buckle bore the inscription "God With Us."

I was well down the mine now. The eyes looking across at me from their military hats were no longer unfathomable great-uncles. They were more like my brothers. They never wrote of longing but I heard the echo in the shafts: how throughout the night and the firing the nightingale sang in the shattered trees, *"It didn't appreciate the value of wings or it wouldn't have been where it was."* I heard the hatred. I heard the bitterness about the conscription debate at home. I heard the shock of the news of each brother's death. I remember my shock at Peter's death, the disbelief at what I knew was inevitable. In Jack's words I heard the tinge of anger in my Father's eyes when he spoke of the loss of his great-uncles. I heard Jack's angry solitude with the words, *"They are all strangers to me."* On a late autumn day in 1917 Jack had walked the several miles to his brother George's regiment, which had finally taken the rubble that was the small town named Passchendaele – 15,654 Canadians had been lost there. The battlefields were a morass of mud, death, and ultimately futility.

> *Have just returned from a visit to George's unit where I found out about poor old Geordie. It seems pretty rotten luck as Captain Little put it, that he should go so far and then get it when and where he did. ... He was killed instantly, which is something to be thankful for, as I would hate to think he had been wounded and probably buried alive in the mud.*
>
> *The conditions were such that they were unable to bring his body out, so they buried him just back of the line. ... Captain Little asked me to come over and have dinner with him and the officers who were with George the night he was killed. But I don't think I'll go, it's bad enough over here as it is, and everybody is kept pretty busy thinking about themselves, so I don't think I'll bother these fellows. They are all strangers to me.*
>
> *The exposure and suffering here would make your blood run cold, and in lots of cases where the wounded are unable to get out themselves, they lay in the mud and eventually die of exposure. Thank God that poor Geordie didn't get any of that. I only wish I could have got it instead of Geordie.*

It is as if I feel his breath. This letter is no letter. This is not history. It is a voice. Jack's loneliness is my loneliness. Jack's anger is my anger. Jack's loyalty is my loyalty. There are no strangers here. In 1895 the young brothers had been lined up for a photograph. Hair brushed, hand-me-downs straightened, they were arranged in order of age. As dutiful boys they looked out at the camera. Now they look out at me. I see only my brothers.

R.H. Thomson is an actor and director. He performed *The Lost Boys* in Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Toronto.

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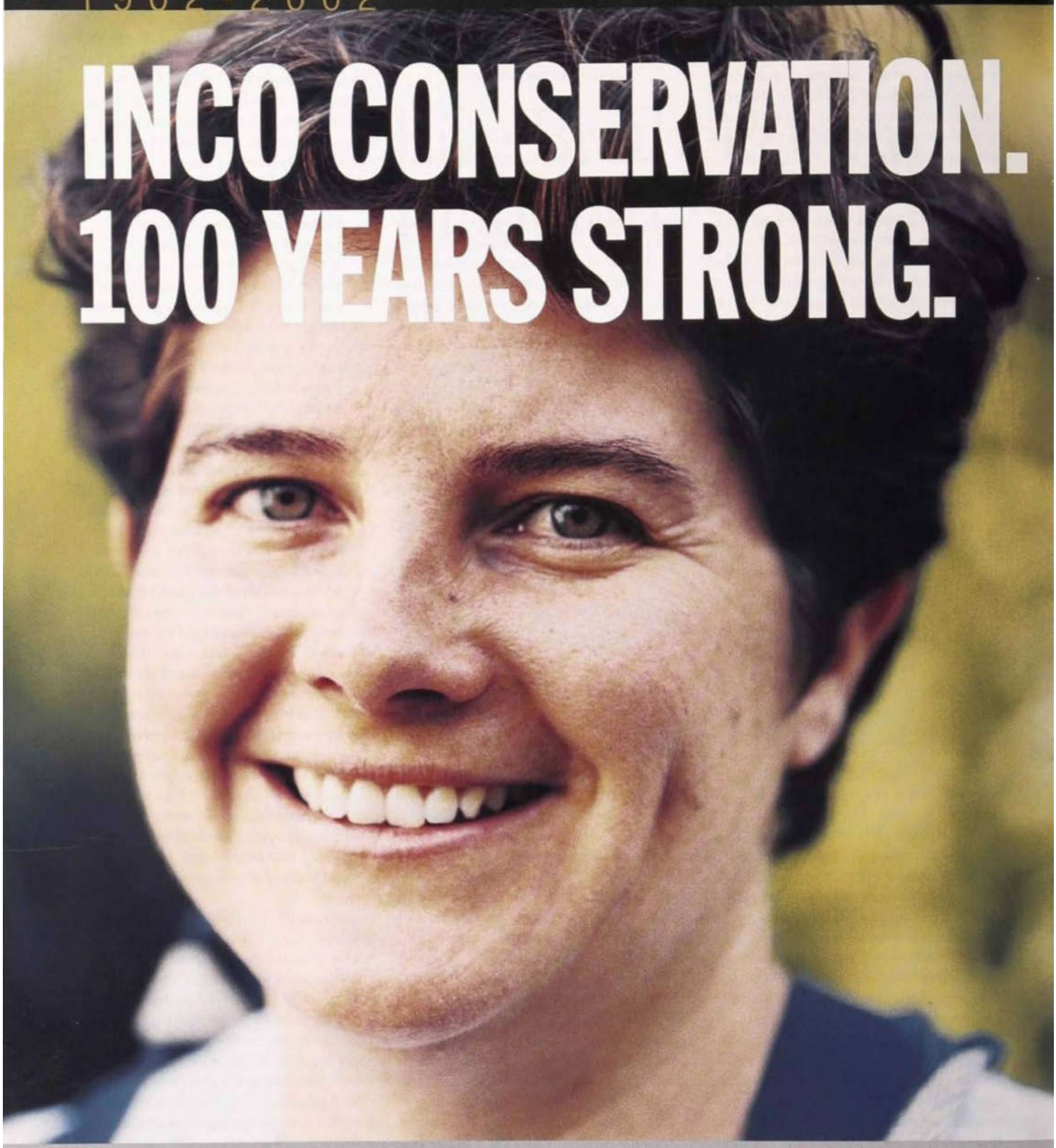

Carolyn Hunt Environmental Coordinator, Sudbury, Ontario
Inco Employee: 15 years

WATER WARRIOR

Carolyn is an Environmental Coordinator with Inco in Sudbury. Her job is to determine, biologically, the impact our operations are having on the environment – then work with plant personnel on reducing it. When not working for Inco, Carolyn is still working for the environment in the community as co-chair of the Junction Creek Stewardship Committee. The group is restoring a lovely local creek after years of pollution from many sources. The funding comes in part from Inco. The heart and soul come from Carolyn and her fellow volunteers.

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Benjamin *Rebel* Lett *Terrorist*

by Chris Raible

In the wake of the 1837 Rebellions, some renegade Canadians tried terror to provoke war between Great Britain and the United States. The most daring of them all was Benjamin Lett, the rogue who blew up Brock's monument.

In the early hours of Good Friday morning, April 17, 1840, the residents of Queenston were wakened by a huge explosion, a sound so loud it also woke their neighbours across the Niagara River in Lewiston, New York. The predawn light revealed that the forty-one-metre memorial to General Isaac Brock was severely damaged, "shattered from turret to foundation stone."

The tower had been the target of a terrorist attack.

Though no one was killed or injured, the response was immediate and intense. There was little doubt that the perpetrators of this outrageous act were Americans.* "Black as are the records of the past," declared the Toronto *Patriot*, "this fresh instance of American treachery is darker still." It marked "the lowest depths of villainy." It "illustrates the falsehood of *friendly relations*!" It reveals "republican malice." Indeed, "the Americans by this act must be branded as the BARBARIANS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY!"

But the perpetrator of this audacious act, Benjamin Lett, was not an American. He was a Canadian – a Canadian closely associated with William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of the 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada.

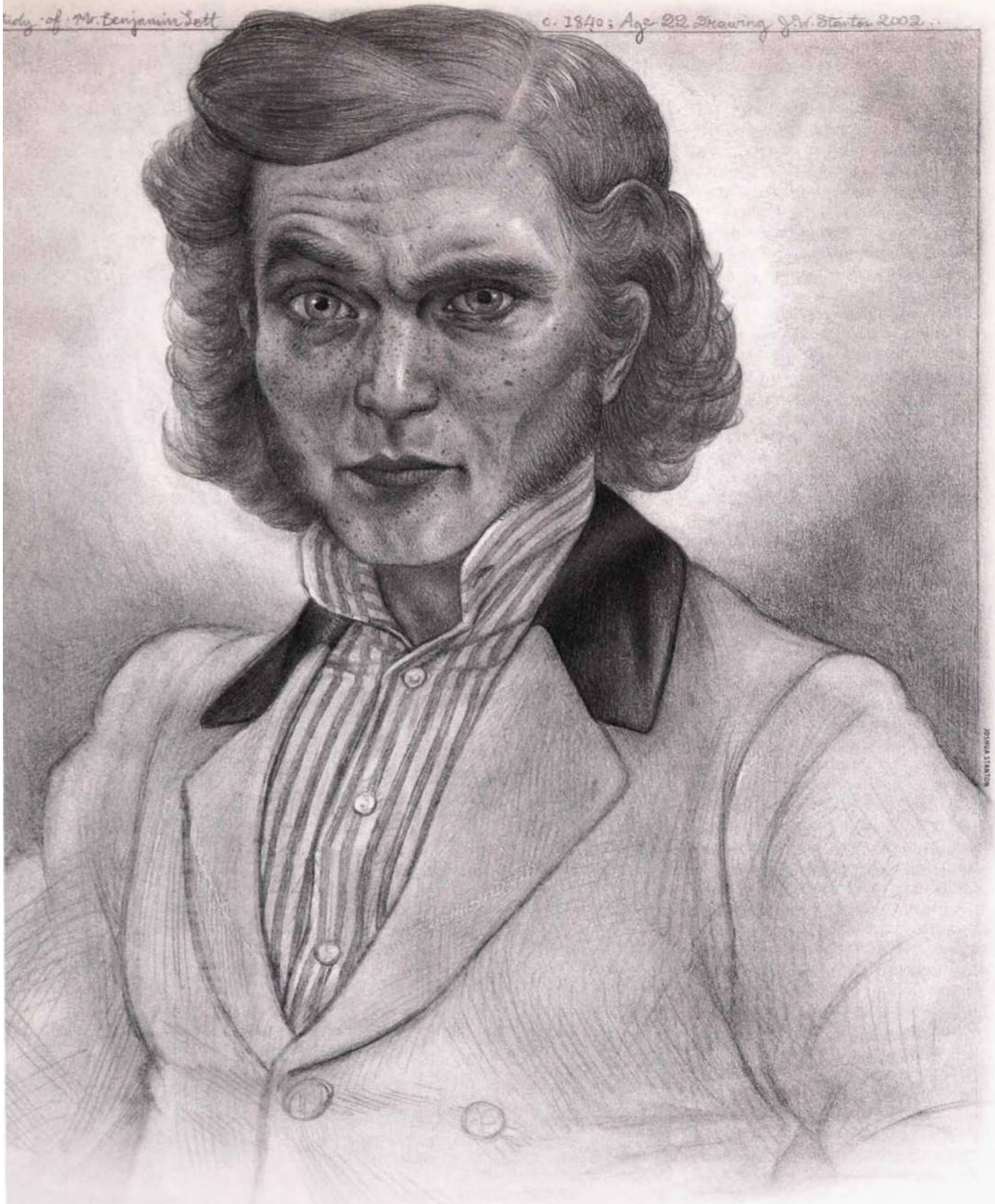
American newspapers quickly denounced the Brock monument mutilation. "Naught but the most wanton and fiendish malignity," thundered the Buffalo *Commercial Advertiser*, "could have prompted any one thus sacrilegiously to disturb the repose of the gallant and honored dead." According to the *Rochester Democrat*, it was "a deed of barbarism unparalleled since the dark ages." The culprits were "abandoned wretches" declared the *Hartford Times*; "devils incarnate," concluded the *Niagara Reporter*.

On the other hand, there were other views. "I confess that the blowing up of Brock's monument ... gratified me," wrote an anonymous American reader. "I suspect [it is] but the beginning of tory troubles in Canada." And there were American editors who, while not applauding the act, could justify it. Perhaps the Canadians had it coming.

The American papers made references to the *Caroline* affair, the destruction of an American steamship in late December 1837. In the wake of the failure of the 1837 Rebellions, hundreds of rebels, including leaders Papineau and Mackenzie, had escaped to the United States. A band of them, led by Mackenzie and augmented by American supporters, occupied Navy Island (Canadian territory in the Niagara River), proclaiming themselves the "Provisional Government of the State of Upper Canada." Canadian government forces, noting that the rebel invaders were being supplied by the steamship *Caroline*, proceeded to capture the ship – in American waters – and set it on fire. As it drifted out into the Niagara River, it broke up and sank, parts of it going over the falls. Killed was Amos Durfee, an American. To the American mind, the affair was a gross violation of sovereignty. Great Britain was not at war with the United States. Seventeen months later, there was still no British compensation – nor even apology – for a wanton act of aggression. Indeed, its chief Canadian instigator, Allan MacNab, had been knighted as a hero. Suggesting that the monument explosion was retaliation for the *Caroline* destruction was not inappropriate.

The 1837 Rebellions, with their object of freeing Lower and Upper Canada from British rule, had been quickly put down. In the months following, however, a series of aftershocks occurred along the Canadian-

*Early Good Friday morning, simultaneously with the Brock monument blast, a major explosion and fire destroyed much of the commercial area of Kingston. Though ruled accidental, the calamity fanned a Canadian paranoia – American arsonists were at large.



Artist's interpretation of Benjamin Lett based on written descriptions.

American frontier. Some, like the occupation of Navy Island, were invasions – from Michigan, Ohio, New York, and Vermont. Small armies of Canadian exiles and American sympathizers – many of them organized by a secret society, the Patriot Hunters – crossed over to reignite the flames of Rebellion. Canadians were expected to rise up, join the invaders, overthrow the British colonial government, and create independent nations of Upper and Lower Canada. It never happened. All the invasions were dismal failures. Invaders were captured, leaders were hanged or summarily executed, and hundreds of men were imprisoned, some of them transported to the penal colonies of Australia.

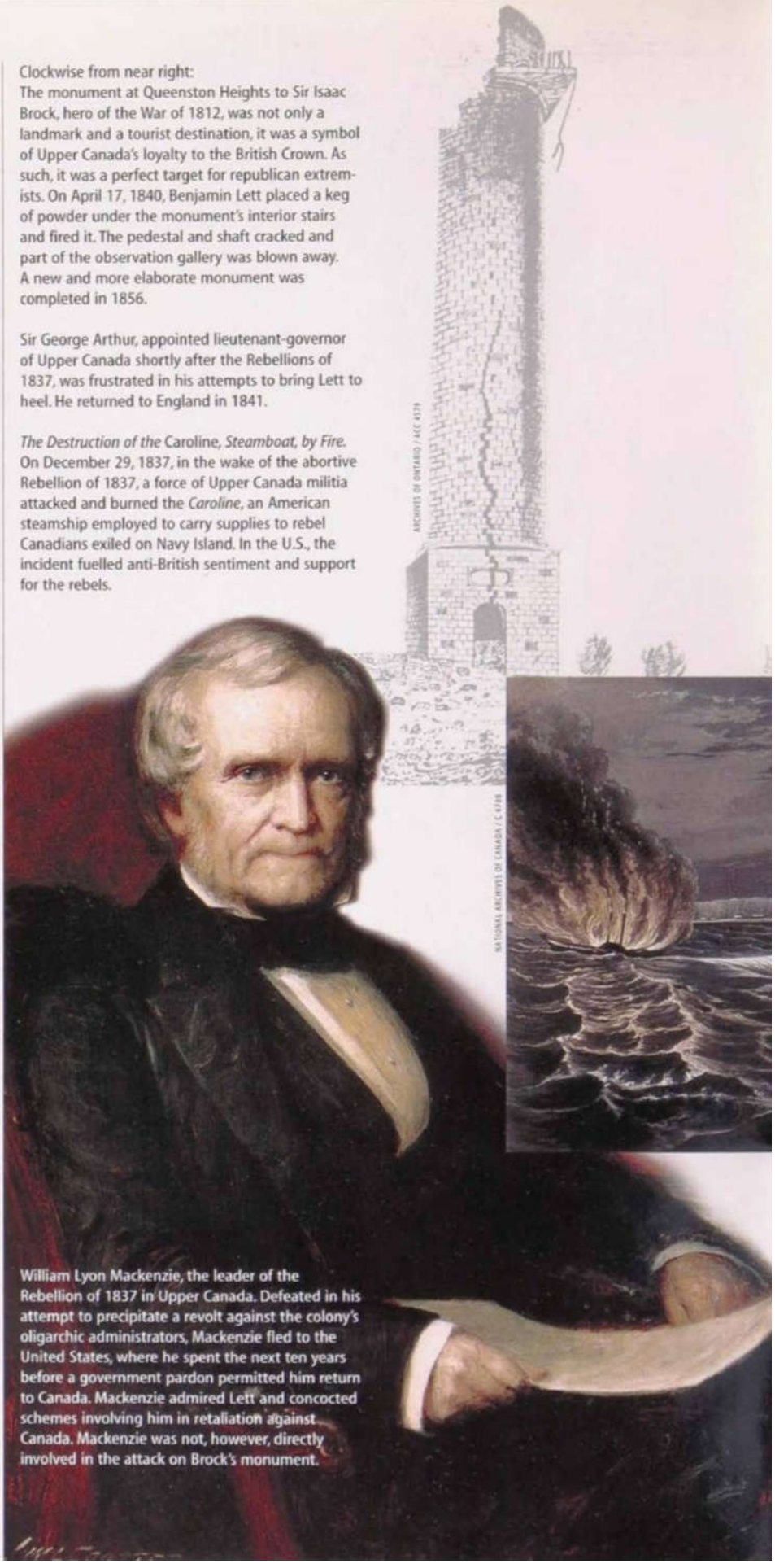
There were also a number of smaller but still aggressive border incidents – threatening letters, petty robberies, barn burnings, cattle killings – all of which worried the Canadian population, arousing fears of a major American invasion. Some Americans, on the other hand, questioned the source of these scattered acts of sabotage. As long as Upper Canada remained in a state of military alert, its militia was paid for its service. A Buffalo newspaper accused Canadian militia members of themselves doing damage and blaming it on the Americans. Even the Brock monument blast, the paper claimed, was probably the work of "some miserable vagabond loafers who ... are reckless of the misery they may inflict ... provided they can swagger about in some tarnished, castoff uniform, and dub themselves officers with the pay and emoluments thereof."

But there were far more serious incursions, guerrilla raids of revenge – "aggressions, robberies, burnings, cold-blooded murders and midnight assassinations," the Toronto *Patriot* called them. In today's terms – acts of terrorism. The terrorists were mostly Canadians based in New York. They made single strikes, each calculated to arouse fears, disrupt commerce, and provoke a British/Canadian military response. Their clear purpose was to prompt war between Great Britain and the United States. Indeed, by 1840, such a war was the last desperate hope of many "Canadian Refugees," as Mackenzie and his exiled associates described themselves.

Clockwise from near right:
The monument at Queenston Heights to Sir Isaac Brock, hero of the War of 1812, was not only a landmark and a tourist destination, it was a symbol of Upper Canada's loyalty to the British Crown. As such, it was a perfect target for republican extremists. On April 17, 1840, Benjamin Lett placed a keg of powder under the monument's interior stairs and fired it. The pedestal and shaft cracked and part of the observation gallery was blown away. A new and more elaborate monument was completed in 1856.

Sir George Arthur, appointed lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada shortly after the Rebellions of 1837, was frustrated in his attempts to bring Lett to heel. He returned to England in 1841.

The Destruction of the Caroline, *Steamboat, by Fire.* On December 29, 1837, in the wake of the abortive Rebellion of 1837, a force of Upper Canada militia attacked and burned the *Caroline*, an American steamship employed to carry supplies to rebel Canadians exiled on Navy Island. In the U.S., the incident fuelled anti-British sentiment and support for the rebels.



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C 4798

William Lyon Mackenzie, the leader of the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada. Defeated in his attempt to precipitate a revolt against the colony's oligarchic administrators, Mackenzie fled to the United States, where he spent the next ten years before a government pardon permitted him return to Canada. Mackenzie admired Lett and concocted schemes involving him in retaliation against Canada. Mackenzie was not, however, directly involved in the attack on Brock's monument.

The most daring and bold of these renegade raiders was Benjamin Lett. The "Rob Roy of Upper Canada," Lieutenant Governor George Arthur dubbed him, "a man who is always prowling about our frontier, devising and committing all manner of mischief!"

It was Benjamin Lett who, late one night in the fall of 1838, knocked at a Chippawa, Upper Canada, farmhouse.

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When Edgeworth Ussher opened the door, Lett shot him point blank. According to the *St. Catharines Journal*, by this "most deliberate, unprovoked and cold-blooded assassination ... no man is safe! Every responsible inhabitant ... [must] rise up as one man to put down ... the atrocity of such lawless fiends in the form of men." The *Niagara Courier* feared "this is but the introductory act of a 'reign of terror'. ... The murderers ... form [a] mystick brotherhood of ruffians who have bound themselves by a secret oath for purposes of plunder and revenge in Canada."

Ussher had been pilot of the crew that took out the *Caroline*. Killing him was an act of retribution for the death of Durfee and the hanging of rebel leaders Lount, Matthews, and Moreau. A poem, "On the Execution of Captain Ussher" (quite possibly written by Lett himself), appeared in the Lockport, New York, *Freeman's Advocate*. One stanza asserted:

> *Remember that vengeance tho' slow in her tread,*
> *Her step is more sure – her arm the more dread;*
> *Her steel to the heart of the tyrant she sends,*
> *From the murderer his cloak of security rends!*

It was Benjamin Lett who, in January 1839, attempted another foray – albeit a failed one: He intended to set afire all the ships anchored in Kingston harbour. And it was Lett who, with others, in July that same year crossed to Cobourg, Upper Canada, with the purpose of murder, robbery, and abduction. A spy informed local authorities, and some raiders – not Lett – were captured. The conspiracy did little damage, but it alarmed local residents and caused distress all along the border. A month later Lett was captured by a British officer, turned over to American authorities (to be tried for Ussher's murder), and promptly escaped.

The *Cobourg Star* described Lett as a villain armed with four pistols and a bowie knife. "[He] is about 25 years old, 5 feet, 11 inches [in] height, rather slim, sandy hair and whiskers, very red faced and freckled, light skinned, very large muscular hands, with round, long and very white fingers. Eyes light blue and *remarkably penetrating*. Had on a black fur hat, rather high in the crown and broad brim; blue coat with black velvet collar; mixed pantaloons and *laced boots*; dark coloured with light spots on it and figured metal buttons."

Who was Benjamin Lett? He was born in Ireland of parents loyal to the British government. Indeed, in the 1798 Irish Rebellion, his mother's brother had been "barbarously murdered" by Irish rebels. In 1819, when Lett was less than a year old, his family emigrated to Canada. They settled first near the Ottawa River. After his father's accidental death, they moved to Darlington Township on Lake Ontario. The family were described as "orangemen and protestants," as "respectable and cultured people." Some neighbours, however, thought Lett (by then, grown) "a dangerous, queer man to have a difference with."

The 1837 Rebellion changed everything. Though sympathetic to reform, neither Lett nor his brother Thomas took part in the uprising. Nevertheless, Lett was accused of supporting it, even of harbouring a fugitive from the defeat of the rebels in Toronto at Montgomery's Tavern. He roused his neighbour's wrath by refusing to join a band of Orangemen in hunting down rebels. He was arrested at Bowmanville, but "while being conveyed to jail at Kingston by three guards, he overpowered them by sheer strength and cunning and escaped."

Lett fled to the United States and soon joined the invaders encamped on Navy Island. Withdrawing from there, he moved on to Detroit, acting as a raider in another attempted invasion. Soon thereafter he joined the Patriot Hunters and began a career of guerrilla warfare.

On April 17, 1840, Lett crossed from Lewiston to Queenston. "Some persons furnished him with a keg of powder. He placed it under the winding stairs inside the [Brock] monument, laid his train and fired it; but it exploded sooner than he expected – the shaft was cracked from top to bottom, about half the parapet and roof were blown off, and the stones rained about Lett's ears so that he came near losing his life. He got off, however."

This description of the event was penned some years later by James Mackenzie, son of William Lyon Mackenzie. As the details suggest (only Lett could have supplied them), James knew Lett well. James had fought with him – Lett saved his life, James confessed – at Fighting Island in the Detroit River, an ill-fated attempt to capture Fort Malden early in 1838. Later that year, as editor of a Lockport, New York newspaper

Lett insisted that his only motive for his subversive activities was a passionate desire to free Canada from oppressive British rule.

supporting Canadian independence, James saw Lett frequently. Indeed, when Lett told him about killing Ussher, James could not condone the act, but could nonetheless term it "a just, though unfortunate retribution."

All attempts by Canadian authorities to capture Lett were frustrated. Lieutenant Governor Arthur offered a £500 reward, but there were no takers. He sent secret agents to kidnap Lett, "to stupefy him with laudanum mixed with brandy and then carry him over the river" to Canada, but the plot was discovered. Arthur appealed to New York governor William Seward to extradite the fugitive and was told that foreign relations were a federal matter. Arthur next turned to the U.S. president for help and was informed that extradition for murder was under state jurisdiction. Arthur then sent his personal representative to see Seward, only to be told that Canada "should be expected in the first instance to give up [*Caroline* instigator] Sir Allan MacNab!" The Americans seemed to be harbouring the terrorist. No wonder Arthur complained, "It was all in vain."

American lack of sympathy for Canada's predicament was understandable. The Canadian government's treatment of captured rebels had earned little respect south of the border. One newspaper even accused them of "murderous tyranny. ... We have no patience with these bloody wretches and much as we abhor assassination we would almost justify it in freeing the world from such monsters" as McNab and Arthur. Many Americans were more than intrigued by Lett; they admired him.

One Lett admirer, especially after the miserable failure of the invasions by Patriot Hunter armies, was William Lyon Mackenzie. In February 1839, Mackenzie wrote Lett suggesting collaboration. It is not clear what escapades Mackenzie proposed, but Lett was eager to assist. He was also willing to deny Mackenzie's participation: "If I should finally conclude to undertake the expeditions ... alluded to, I will exonerate you from all blame." Lett would even cover for him, stating that "your assertions and advice [were] to the contrary."

Four months later, Mackenzie was jailed for violating American neutrality laws. The next month, July, Lett was involved with the raid on Cobourg. Whether Mackenzie had been party to that conspiracy prior to his incarceration is uncertain, but he had foreknowledge of it.

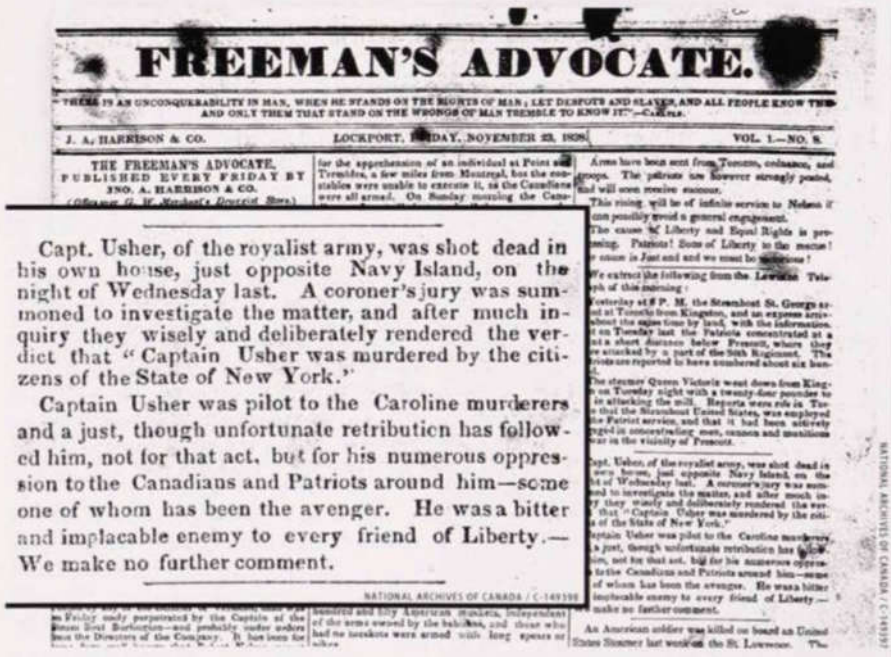
From prison in Rochester, New York, Mackenzie continued to publish his weekly newspaper promoting sympathy for Canadian liberty and to carry on extensive correspondence. Lett visited him in prison, but did not take his advice to flee to Texas. (Texas, an independent country at the time, was a safe haven for outlaws.) Mackenzie feared, as he mused to James, that Lett would be captured or kidnapped. "He will have roamed the mouth of the pit, I fear, till he falls in." James responded with news that Lett had plans to burn another steamship, the *Telegraph*.

The following April, Lett bombed Brock's monument. A month later, James reported, Lett had "left for the border. He's a bold fellow as even I admit, but it is in his peculiar way. We expect him soon back." He did not go back, however. He was arrested in Oswego, New York, for attempted arson.

Lett's trial was something of a sensation and was widely reported. With an accomplice (who turned state's evidence), Lett had filled a trunk with combustible material and had it taken aboard the Canadian steamship *Great Britain*. The bomb fizzled, doing little damage. Lett was captured, tried, and convicted. The presiding judge condemned him as the "intended perpetrator of the most atrocious acts which man can commit against his fellow man" and sentenced him to seven years hard labour in the New York state prison at Auburn.

At his trial and in his private writings, Lett insisted that his only motive for his subversive activities was a passionate desire to free Canada from oppressive British rule. There can be little doubt of his sincerity, despite many accusations of his being a villain or a thief.

But Lett had another motive, never openly admitted, but widely believed by his associates. As James, in a letter marked "Strictly Private," revealed to his



FREEMAN'S ADVOCATE.

"THERE IS AN UNCONQUERABILITY IN MAN, WHEN HE STANDS ON THE RIGHTS OF MAN; LET DESPOTS AND SLAVES, AND ALL PEOPLE KNOW THIS AND ONLY THEM THAT STAND ON THE WRONGS OF MAN TREMBLE TO KNOW IT."—CARLYLE.

J. A. HARRISON & CO. LOCKPORT, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1838. VOL. 1.—NO. 8.

THE FREEMAN'S ADVOCATE, PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY JNO. A. HARRISON & CO.

Capt. Usher, of the royalist army, was shot dead in his own house, just opposite Navy Island, on the night of Wednesday last. A coroner's jury was summoned to investigate the matter, and after much inquiry they wisely and deliberately rendered the verdict that "Captain Usher was murdered by the citizens of the State of New York."

Captain Usher was pilot to the Caroline murderers and a just, though unfortunate retribution has followed him, not for that act, but for his numerous oppression to the Canadians and Patriots around him—some one of whom has been the avenger. He was a bitter and implacable enemy to every friend of Liberty.—We make no further comment.

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-149397

The *Freeman's Advocate* was published between 1838 and 1839 in Lockport, New York, and edited by James Mackenzie, the son of William Lyon Mackenzie, the ringleader of the sedition in Toronto in December 1837. Dedicated to Canada's political independence, the paper sought to restore the spirits of Canadians who were refugees from the Rebellion and to encourage Americans to support the cause of a republican Canada. The inset contains the report of the shooting of Edgeworth Ussher, for which Lett was later charged.

father: "Lett cannot be blamed for his hatred to the British." A group of soldiers had once raped Lett's sister. "While the Mother kneeling, offered her life as a sacrifice to save her daughter's honour, [she was] violated by 11 persons – and the mother too!" The whole family was "deserted by their neighbours" and "shamed from their homes!" "Is this not cause for his hatred?" James asked, adding a warning: "*He never will be taken alive or die alone!*"

The sentencing of Benjamin Lett to prison, however, was anything but the end of the story. After his capture, James had mused to his father, "Lett ought to have some person sent to Oswego to furnish him with the means of taking the chains off his legs – or else he may find himself in State Prison." How prescient James was. En route by train to prison, Lett escaped.

His flight was as sensational as his terrorism. News reports were accompanied by fevered accusations of collusion or incompetence. Editorial outrage was intense. James warned his father: "The comments passed on Lett's case satisfy me that [we] will come under a rigid moral censure ... a fanatic opposition ... will make our acts appear heinous [while] acts far more violent ... possessed of the sanction of England ... will pass unnoticed."

Shortly before Lett's trial, Mackenzie had been pardoned and released from jail. He had immediately begun a tour of several states, hoping to arouse fresh interest in the Canadian cause. He'd also started thinking of new ways to retaliate against Canada. With Lett loose again, a new conspiracy was conceived.

James, however, vigorously dissented. "If we choose means which we have condemned as decidedly wrong, cruel & immoral in our opponents, they do not become right by our use of them. ... [We must not] countenance a wanton destruction of property & indirect assassination, merely because these men have violated ... our rights." Nevertheless the plot progressed – and was accomplished.

In August 1840, Lett and Mackenzie met at Niagara Falls and sabotaged the Welland Canal by bombing a waterway. Traffic was disrupted and major repairs had to be made. A few days later, safely back in the U.S., Lett, using a code signature on his letter, reported to Mackenzie the success of their venture. But canal officials made no public report of the destruction. No St. Catharines newspaper referred to the incident. "I am astonished that you have not heard of it," Lett wrote, "it is kept as still as death on the other side." Nonetheless, he boasted, dam officials "know quite well the cause of the break." In short, there was a cover-up. Mackenzie promptly leaked the details to a Rochester paper, which ran the story.

For the next several months, Lett was reportedly seen at various points along the frontier. There were incidents of theft or minor damage, but none specifically attributed to him. Rewards offered for his capture grew to $9,000. After another unsuccessful attempt to burn a ship, the *Minos*, Lett headed west to Illinois where his family had by then settled. By the following summer, 1841, he was back in the Niagara region, plotting again to damage the Welland Canal.

This time his cohort was Edward Theller, another rebel patriot and Mackenzie associate. Mackenzie was not directly involved, but Theller kept him informed in great detail. Several men took part. Kegs of powder were obtained at Black Rock, New York. The Niagara River was crossed by canoe in the fog. Lett was captured – betrayed by a government spy, it was later learned – but the mission was accomplished.

Unlike the earlier sabotage, this explosion was reported by Welland Canal officials. They assured the public that the damage was minimal and the lock would be quickly fixed – which, indeed, it was. The blast turned out to be the last futile act of sabotage. Until the Fenian invasions a quarter of a century later, all was quiet along the frontier.

Benjamin Lett was imprisoned and brutally treated in jail. His health failed, but friends (he had many) did not forget him. After repeated urgings, the New York governor issued a pardon releasing him. There were rumours that he joined the Mexican army then fighting the Americans, but he was too ill. His brother Thomas in Illinois took him in.

Lett's story was not over, however. In December 1858, Benjamin Lett was back in the news. On a business trip on Lake Michigan, he suddenly fell ill, was rushed to Milwaukee, and died. The Milwaukee *Sentinel* reported, "The captain and mate of the vessel on which Mr. Lett came here expressed their confident belief that he was poisoned and they doubted not by whom." An autopsy confirmed his death by strychnine. The man accused of giving the poison was never charged. No motive was clear, but Lett's brother asserted, "England had not money enough to hire ... cut-throats to face him and shoot him down."

Benjamin Lett was buried not far from Chicago. Two monuments erected by his brother bear lengthy inscriptions – nearly 2,500 words – defending Lett's honour and arguing his innocence. One of them reads: "Benjamin Lett, the Canadian patriot, died December 9th, 1858, aged 45 years and 25 days, who was pursued for more than twenty years by the most powerful political party upon earth and they had to stoop to perjury and poison to accomplish his destruction."

Years earlier the damaged Brock monument had been replaced with the taller, grander column that today stands on Queenston Heights, bold testimony to failed American invasions.

On learning of Lett's death, James Mackenzie, by then an editor and prominent citizen of Lima, Ohio, wrote a memoir. It concluded: "He was certainly a singular man; and whatever the provocation may have been beyond colonial oppression which developed him as he was, we have not a doubt that under happier circumstances he would have been a man of useful energy, and a supporter of law under a wisely administered and worthy government." ▣

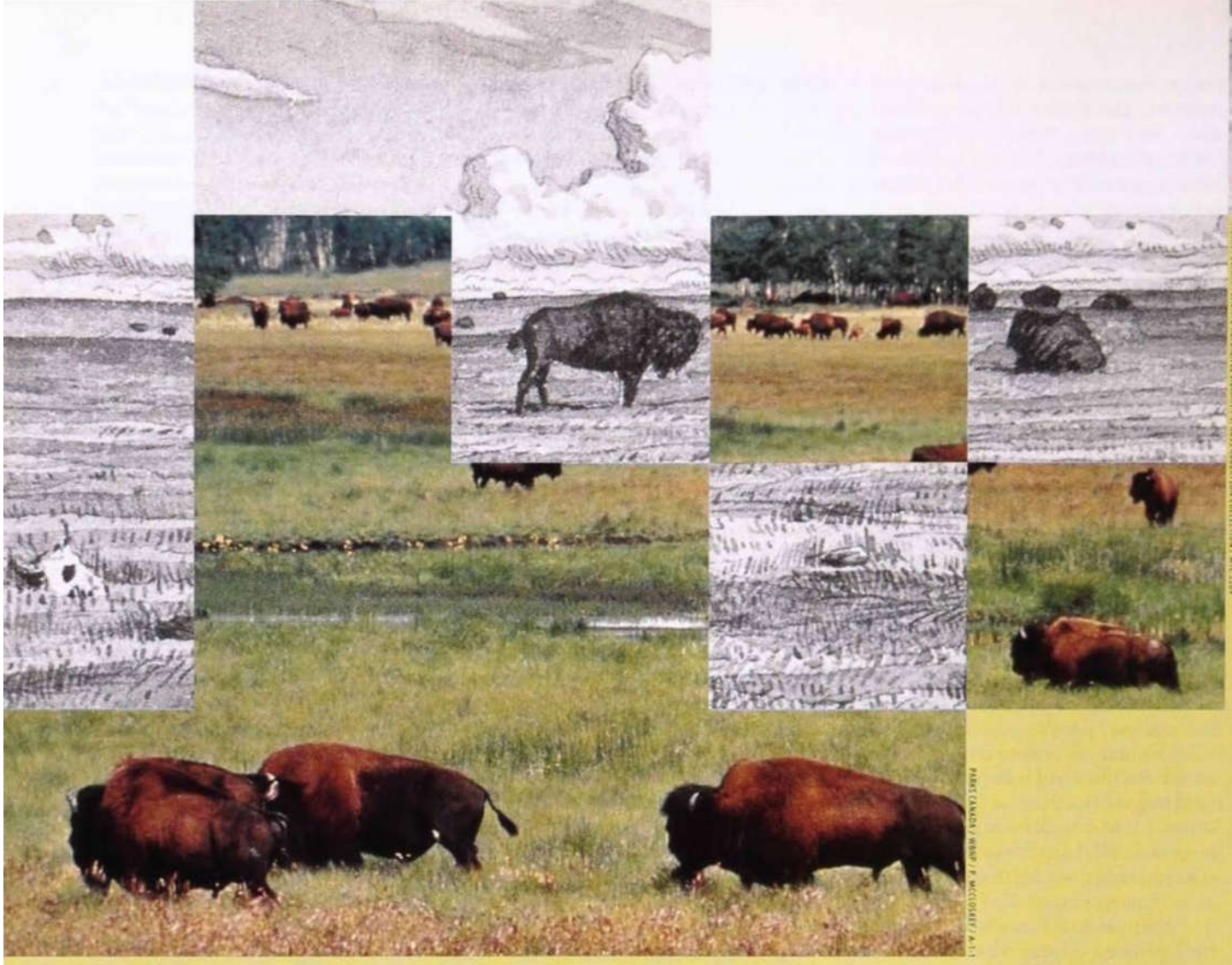
Chris Raible is the author of two books and many articles on William Lyon Mackenzie and Upper Canadian history.

et cetera

Muddy York Mud: Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada **by Chris Raible. Dundurn Press, Toronto, 1992.**

Canada: A People's History**, episode 7, "Rebellion and Reform," deals with the events of 1837 and their aftermath. Available on VHS or DVD as part of a set through <http://history.cbc.ca/history> or by calling 1-800-955-7711.**

Information about the 1837 Rebellions can be found at <www.edunetconnect.com/cat/rebellions/index.html>.



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Bison: Back from the Brink

by Bill Burns

Once the hooves of tens of millions of bison thundered across vast tracts of North America, from the spruce bogs of the Arctic Circle to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. No other large mammal on any continent, at any time in history, existed in such numbers. Nor did any other animal play such a dominant role in the history of a continent. Although this primeval beast was the living emblem of the West to both First Nations and settlers, the bison stood in the way of the Europeans' westward expansion. That alone sealed the bison's fate.

The American version of the buffalo* saga, perpetuated by colourful stories of hunters like Buffalo Bill

* Debate continues about whether these bearded and bulky creatures should be called *bison* or *buffalo*. How the term *buffalo* came into use is unclear. It could be a corruption of the Portuguese word *bufalo*, used to describe the hides of the Cape buffalo. More likely, the term buffalo came from the French-Canadian voyageurs' *boeuf*, meaning ox or cattle. While the more common name is buffalo, the correct name is bison, as true buffalo have no shoulder hump.

How could a magnificent animal that once teemed on North America's Great Plains nearly vanish? Through greed, guns, and racism. But thanks to the foresight of a few, the bison was brought back from oblivion.

Cody and Sitting Bull, contrasts with the lesser-known but equally fascinating Canadian version – which is less bloody and played a vital part in rescuing the bison from oblivion

Before the first European explorers arrived in North America, the oddly built bison dominated all phases of the life of the Plains First Nations, who adapted their lifestyle to its nomadic existence. The bison acquired mythic proportions with many of the First Nations and was revered as a life giver – as indeed it was (see sidebar, page 21).

The symbiotic relationship that existed between bison and the Plains First Nations was dependent on a third element – the landscape that shaped this magnificent animal.

The Great Plains of North America stretch 2,400 kilometres from Alberta to Mexico and some 1,300 kilometres from east to west. Also called the Central Plains, the Great American Desert, the Prairies, or the Bison Belt, these tall and short grasslands dominate the central part of the continent. The seasons rule this harsh and severe landscape: Winter freezes the brooks and streams, dumping a thick blanket of snow that makes travel impossible. Spring melts the snow, changing streams to raging torrents. The intense heat of summer dries up the streams and bakes the land, scorching the earth until it becomes desert.

Wind is the constant voice of the plains, sweeping unimpeded across the trackless expanse as vast as the ocean. Often the wind turns fierce, producing raging blizzards in winter and violent, hail-laden thunderstorms in summer. Twisters roar to life from the violent collision of air masses.

The Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez was the first known European to see and describe a bison. In 1521, his historian De Solis wrote, "It has a bunch on its back like a camel ... its neck covered with hair like a lion ... its head armed like that of a bull, which it resembles in fierceness, with no less strength and agility." When Francisco Vázquez de Coronado reached Texas in 1540, he compared the numbers of bison to "fish in the sea." In the two years Coronado's expedition spent on the Great Plains, they were never out of the sight of bison. Centuries later, U.S. General Phillip Sheridan rode 122 kilometres from Fort Dodge to Fort Supply through one solid herd. Some officers with Sheridan estimated the herd at a staggering – and clearly exaggerated – *ten billion*. In 1858, Red River trader James McKay rode for twenty days through an almost solid herd. "On all sides, as far as the eye could see," he wrote, "the prairie was black with them."

Facing page: ***Buffalo Herd, South Saskatchewan River near Elbow, Saskatchewan,*** **watercolour over pencil by William George Richardson Hind (1833– 1889). Contemporary picture is of free-roaming bison grazing in the Peace Athabaska Delta at Wood Buffalo National Park.**

How many bison inhabited North America? Estimates range from 30 million to more than 100 million. One thing is certain, however: Despite their great numbers, bison were reduced to a few hundred in under a hundred years.

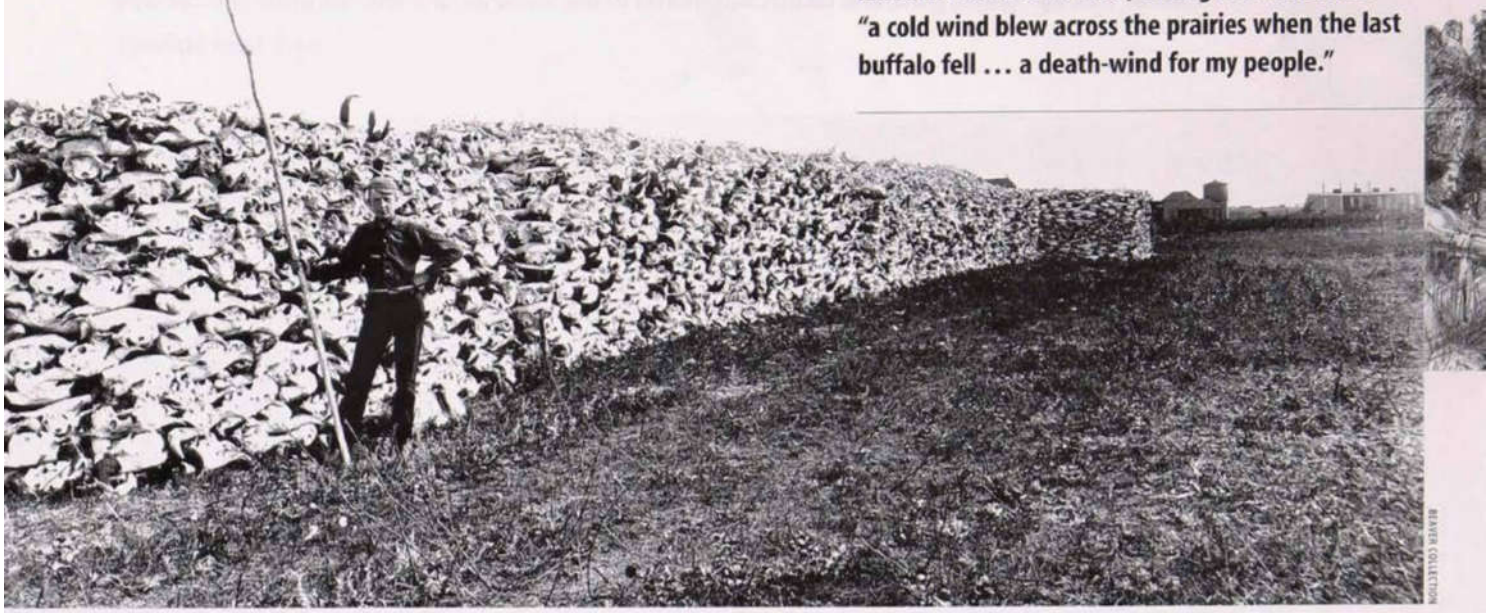
When the first Europeans arrived along the eastern coast, they discovered scattered herds of bison. This so-called "eastern bison" was so successful Farley Mowat claimed "it was the dominant herbivore of the Atlantic seaboard." Explorers initially speculated there were four types of buffalo: plains, wood, mountain (also called the Oregon bison), and eastern bison. Zoologists now classify bison into two types – the more numerous plains bison (*bison bison bison*) and the wood bison (*bison bison athabascæ*).

The first reported sighting of a wood bison came from Samuel Hearne in 1772. Hearne wrote that the bull's huge size prevented the hunters from skinning it in one coat. Instead, they had to cut off the meat on one side to turn the bull over. This was necessary as a wood bison bull can exceed two metres at the shoulder, measure 3.6 metres in length and top 1,000 kilograms. A female's weight averages about half that of a male. (By comparison, a plains bull seldom exceeds 900 kilograms.) The wood bison moved in small herds close to forests, spreading out over a wide arc extending from northeast British Columbia across Alberta to northwest Saskatchewan and up into the southwest Northwest Territories. With an estimated wood bison population during the early 1800s of only 168,000, the numbers of wood bison never approached those of its plains cousins.

The reason for the bison slaughter in the U.S. was simple. Bison, along with the Plains natives, blocked the westward expansion of European settlers who wanted to farm and raise crops. General Sheridan urged settlers to "kill until the buffalo is exterminated, as it is the only way to bring lasting peace and allow civilization to advance."

Initially, buffalo hunters shot bison to supply railway crews with fresh meat. Buffalo Bill Cody got his name after being hired for the then huge wage of $500 a month to shoot twelve bison a day – easy work for a sharpshooter. (Legendary hunter Tom Nixon once killed 120 in forty minutes.) As railways began shipping bison hides and meat back east, demand increased and the slaughter became indiscriminate. Entire herds

When the last herd of wild buffalo in the U.S. was killed in Colorado in 1897, Sitting Bull lamented "a cold wind blew across the prairies when the last buffalo fell ... a death-wind for my people."



BEAVER COLLECTION

Buffalo skulls at Saskatoon, August 1890. William Van Horne, general manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway during the construction on the prairie section, saw the value of buffalo bones as fertilizer. He had them gathered and stacked along rail sidings and shipped east to factories to bring the cash-strapped CPR some extra revenue. By the late nineteenth century, the enormous herds that once roamed the Great Plains had been reduced to little more than this.

were decimated for the prized tongues, which were pickled, leaving 3 billion pounds of meat a year to rot. After witnessing such a hunt in 1843, Audubon wrote "what a terrible destruction of life, as the tongues only were brought in and the flesh ... left."

After the railway opened up the Great Plains in the early 1870s, the killing escalated as thousands of buffalo hunters poured into the American west. The extent of the slaughter staggers the imagination. Bison expert Colonel Richard Irving Dodge claims 5.5 million were killed from 1872 to 1874 around Kansas. Joseph Allen puts the figure at 2.5 million a year from 1870 to 1875. "Hunting trains" became popular, with guides like Buffalo Bill Cody helping distinguished visitors like the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia shoot bison from the comfort of a train seat.

Soon the plains became a vast boneyard, with mountains of skulls stockpiled for eventual use as fertilizer. The near extinction of North America's largest land mammal marked the end of the frontier era. The Indians were declared "pacified," settlements dotted the plains, and the train replaced the prairie schooners. When the last herd of wild buffalo in the U.S. was killed in Colorado in 1897, Sitting Bull lamented "a cold wind blew across the prairies when the last buffalo fell ... a death-wind for my people."

Canada's role in the near annihilation differed. Pressure to open the West to immigration was not as strong. In fact, the Hudson's Bay Company persistently opposed settlement of the West – Canada didn't buy Rupert's Land from the HBC until 1869. Unlike the U.S., railways in Canada played almost no part in the wholesale slaughter as the CPR was built *after* the bison were destroyed.

The Plains First Nations in Canada hunted bison, stampeding them into enclosures or off cliffs. After horses were introduced, these primitive techniques were abandoned as natives followed the herds on horseback. The culling had no effect on the numbers of bison, and the First Nations habit of setting fires helped keep the plains free of trees, which probably contributed to the numbers of plains bison.

While Canada's role might be considered less bloody, as far back as the 1820s Métis organized large hunting expeditions. One expedition leaving Fort Garry in Manitoba in spring boasted over fifteen hundred hunters, accompanied by women and children and some twelve hundred Red River carts needed to carry the dried meat and hides back. These organized hunts continued into the 1860s, when bison, pressured by hunting on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel, disappeared from Manitoba.

One of the first conservation measures was taken by Plains Cree living 400 kilometres west of Winnipeg. They became so worried that they assembled a council in 1857, which decided to forbid white men to kill bison on their land. Pressure increased on the remaining plains bison in Saskatchewan and Alberta when American traders crossed the border in 1866 and built Fort Whoop-Up in southern Alberta to trade rotgut whisky for bison hides. In 1873, the U.S. consul in Winnipeg wrote, "the destruction of buffalo in the Saskatchewan region must have amounted to considerably more than a million." By 1876, Cree leader Sweetgrass was pleading for bison protection.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA/C-3331

Crowfoot addressing the Marquis of Lorne; pow-wow at Blackfoot Crossing, Bow River, September 10, 1881, pencil sketch by Sydney Prior Hall. John Douglas Campbell, Marquis of Lorne and husband of Queen Victoria's fourth daughter, Princess Louise, was governor general of Canada from 1878 to 1883. On his 1881 tour of western Canada, he took part in a hunting expedition, in which he purportedly killed the last bison in Alberta. Here, Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot nation tells of the destitution and starvation of his people due to the slaughter of the bison.

The next year, the North-West Territories council passed the Buffalo Protection Act, but it lacked any provision for enforcement. A toothless piece of legislation, it was repealed a year later.

Credited with killing the last bison in Alberta is John Douglas Campbell, the Marquis of Lorne, governor-general of Canada from 1878 to 1883. On a well-publicized tour of western Canada to promote the building of the CPR and lure immigrants to the west, Lord Lorne took part in a hunt near the Red Deer River, chasing and shooting three bulls in 1881. With hunting restrictions absent and indiscriminate slaughter prevailing, starvation spread across the First Nations of the prairies. When the CPR reached Regina in 1882 all that remained were bison bones, giving the future capital its first name – Pile o' Bones.

After plains bison were slaughtered, hunters turned their guns on the wood bison roaming the boreal forests of northern Canada. By 1891, only 300 were left in an isolated region, now Wood Buffalo National Park, a thousand kilometres south of the Arctic Circle.

The plains bison might be extinct today if it was not for the foresight of a few men, like Manitobans James McKay and Charles Alloway, who captured calves. McKay raised the bison outside Winnipeg until his death in 1879 when Colonel Sam Bedson, warden at Stony Mountain prison, took over. By 1888, the herd numbered 125 and Bedson gave twenty-seven to Donald A. Smith as a repayment of a loan. Smith, who later became Lord Strathcona, donated bison to the Assiniboine Zoo in Winnipeg and Banff National Park. Colonel Bedson sold the rest to C.J. "Buffalo" Jones of Kansas. Moving the bison proved difficult for Jones as the bulls fought while confined at the railway pen, killing three bison. When the bison reached Missouri, thirteen stampeded while being unloaded, rampaging through Kansas City.

In 1872 Samuel Walking Coyote found several motherless calves in Alberta and raised them in northern Montana until he could no longer afford to buy feed for his growing herd. Walking Coyote sold them in 1884 for $2,500 to two Montana ranchers, Charles Allard and Michel Pablo, who later bought Buffalo Jones's herd.

In 1906, after Allard died, the herd was offered to the U.S. gov-

The Bison – North America's Largest Land Animal

Tales of the incredible strength of bison are legend, with frontiersmen witnessing bison goring grizzlies to death. In 1872 Colonel Richard Irving Dodge wrote that two trains of the Santa Fe Railway were "thrown off the tracks twice in one week" by rampaging bison. Decades later Texan Bob Yokum shipped a bison to Mexico for an unusual bullfight. Yokum's bison dislocated a back leg in the rail car, but even with only three good legs easily dispatched four Mexican bulls in rapid succession.

Recently, naturalists at Elk Island Park recorded an enraged bull charging a car and flipping it upside down into a ditch – along with its four passengers. Yellowstone National Park has recorded fifty attacks by bison since 1983, two of which resulted in fatalities after visitors were gored.

Bison are long-lived, with an average lifespan of twenty-five years. Cows mature early, at age three, and one famous female produced calves almost every year until she died at age forty-one. Bulls guarding harems produce a roar that sounds much like a lion and are surprisingly agile – one bull jumped a 2.1-metre fence.

A bison possesses surprising speed for a creature the size and weight of a pickup truck. It can reach sixty-one kilometres over sprint distances – three times faster than a man can run. In the 1980s, a hand-raised bison called Harvey Wallbanger raced against horses in Vancouver and Calgary, winning over 80 percent of the races. Over time, the bison evolved another survival trait – the ability to outdistance any enemy it could not outsprint. The bison's ability to run all day fascinated and frustrated the first cowboys who tried to round up the beasts. ▣

—B.B.

BEAVER COLLECTION

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ernment, but Congress refused to appropriate the funds. Snubbed by Congress's action, Pablo approached the Canadian government, which bought his entire herd for $245 a head. Even with seventy-five cowboys chasing the herd, it proved impossible to round up the bison. After months of futile attempts, Pablo built forty-two kilometres of fence leading to a boxcar. The plan failed when the lead bull roared up the ramp and crashed through the wall of the boxcar as if it were a paper bag. It took six years, but eventually the last of the 709 bison were transported north to Alberta's Elk Island Park, a wildlife sanctuary, in 1912.

The farcical roundup turned into a tragedy thirteen years later. By then the herd had multiplied so rapidly that authorities ignored the protests of wildlife managers and began moving surplus plains bison north to Wood Buffalo National Park, created in 1922 as a permanent habitat for the last remaining wood bison. By 1940, the dire predictions seemed to be true – crossbreeding put the last of the wood bison out of existence.

Then in 1957, in an inaccessible corner of Wood Buffalo National Park isolated by more than 120 kilometres of impenetrable muskeg, a plane spotted a herd of 200 bison. They proved to be "pure" wood bison. The species was not extinct. Their capture, in the deep snow of midwinter when the frozen muskeg permitted access, turned out to be one of the most difficult animal rescues ever attempted. This time the wood bison were kept separated from the interbred herd.

Gradually the numbers of both types of bison increased until today some 350,000 range on public and private land throughout the continent – the vast majority being plains bison. Wood bison numbers exceed 4,500, with almost all of these in Canada. With both Canadian and U.S. governments committed to their continued protection, the bison's survival seems assured. But what of their future? Will bison be viewed as shaggy curiosities confined to outdoor pens and offering viewers a window on a vanished world?

Conservationists have proposed grandiose plans like the Buffalo Commons, which would return parts of ten states and three provinces to their former wild state, in a area extending from Saskatoon to the Texas Panhandle. Other schemes include the Big Open, which would transform eastern Montana into an American Serengeti supporting 75,000 free-ranging bison. And two University of Calgary academics want

BEAVER COLLECTION

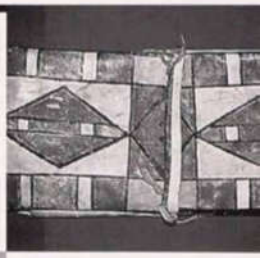
Bison grazing on Lord Strathcona's Silver Heights estate, west of Winnipeg, March 1898.

The Four-Legged Commissary

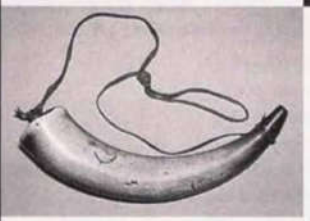
On a material level, it is doubtful any other animal anywhere in the world was as important to a people as the bison. It was a four-legged commissary providing all of the prime needs of First Nations: food, shelter, and clothing. The secondary uses of the bison were many and varied; horns provided drinking vessels, hooves produced glue, sinews were used as bowstrings, bladders became pouches, and bones served a number of functions, ranging from needles to bowls. One expert listed eighty-seven different nonfood uses of the bison. Even the animal's droppings were valuable. On the treeless prairie, they were often the only fuel source available. White settlers called them "buffalo chips" and claimed they provided "a hot fire with little smoke."

At right are a few bison items used by First Nations.

Bison rawhide parfleche (right) from the Stoney First Nation, decorated with pigments. These rawhide envelopes were used to store and transport personal goods as well as meat and pemmican.



Powder horn (below) fashioned from a bison horn.



HBC MUSEUM COLLECTION, THE MANITOBA MUSEUM

A bison-hide frock coat (left), collected by John Halkett in the Red River area, c. 1821, featuring painted floral designs and porcupine quillwork panels.

most of the Palliser Triangle turned into a park almost the size of Nova Scotia. The proponents of all three plans claim these semiarid prairie areas are so savaged by wind and hail that little agriculture is possible.

Many First Nations want to see bison restored to underpopulated areas of the plains, which would not only restore the bison to native culture but spark economic renewal through hunting and tourism. But debate rages about "game ranching," where a hunter can pay as much as $14,000 to shoot bison on private land.

Not only does the bison have a legendary past, its future promises to change the face of agribusiness in North America. Today, thousands of ranches raise bison, ranging in size from American television mogul Ted Turner's 567,000-hectare ranch – containing the world's largest private herd of 17,000 bison – to smaller spreads. Turner claims "bison are the wave of the future." Ranchers like Albertan Gary Fakeley agree, saying bison "are one-tenth of the work of beef cows and make three times the money."

Indeed, bison offer many advantages over cattle. These extremely hardy animals can survive the tough blizzards that would kill cattle. In fact, bison are so tough they will actually face into the driving snowstorm, using their noses as blunt snowploughs to push aside snow to graze. As large as domestic cattle, they eat only a third as much. Their meat is less fatty than cattle and has less cholesterol than chicken. At the same time, bison beef is high in protein.

The Canadian Bison Association lists 1,250 bison ranches operating in Canada. In the late 1990s, commercial production was expected to grow 25 percent a year until 2005, one of the fastest growing areas in agriculture. If demand continues to increase as it did through the 1990s, experts predict as many as 700,000 animals will be processed ten years from now. Given these exponential figures, it is small wonder that some agribusiness analysts predict bison will displace cattle in North America.

It's taken a century, but that great bearded creature of myth, an anachronism belonging to the frontier era, has made a dramatic comeback. Once again bison graze in free-roaming herds as they have done for centuries. Even the rarer wood bison was down-listed from "endangered" to "threatened" in 1988. While conservationists, First Nations, and agribusiness all claim to share the same goal – the recovery of the bison – the question remains: Can nostalgia peacefully coexist with free enterprise? The last chapter in the bison saga still has to be written.

Winnipeg-born Bill Burns was once charged by a bull bison and narrowly avoided being gored. He is the author of *Raising Susan: A Man, a Woman, and a Golden Eagle* and is working on a book about bison.

et cetera

Buffalo Sacred and Sacrificed by Grant MacEwan. Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Edmonton, 1995.

The Long Hunt: Death of the Buffalo East of the Mississippi by Ted Belue. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, 1996.

The Great Bison Saga, a 1985 film by Michael McKennirey about the revival of the bison, is available through the National Film Board at <www.nfb.ca> or by calling 1-800-267-7710.

Last Things First

Little wonder our ancestors' minds moved to things spectral at this time of year. The sun moves to its lowest point on the horizon, the nights lengthen, the days draw in; the harvest is over and there's the scent of impending winter in the air. In the cycle of life, the dark days of late October and November are the season of death. Pre-Christians celebrated the gloom with necromantic rituals, which the Church later adopted and sanctified as All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, All Souls Day, and the Day of the Dead – feasts dedicated to the spirits.

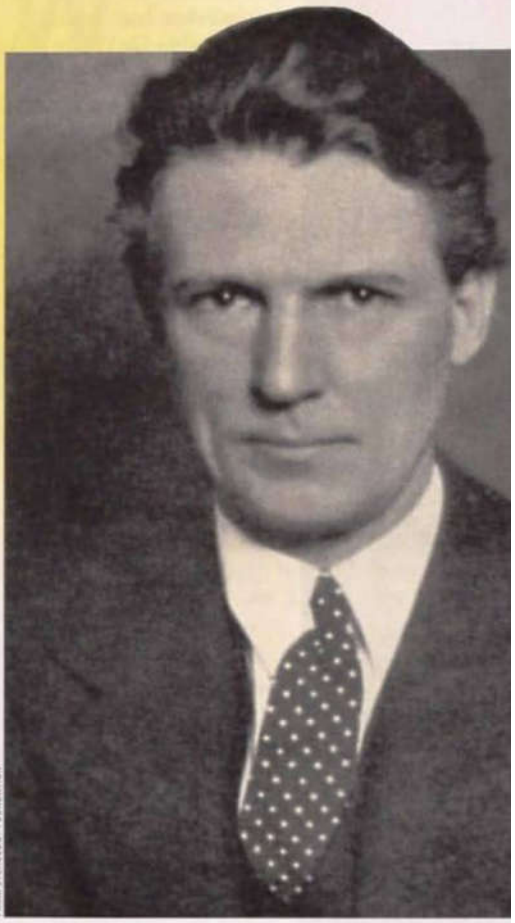
Befitting the season, two stories of Last Things follow – each with a Late Victorian twist: In the final years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, the religious beliefs of Canadians were challenged by the convictions of biological science. This crisis of faith led some – like Charles Edgar DeWolfe, a Windsor, Nova Scotia, judge – to eagerly embrace the nostrum of spiritualism. In "The Ghostbuster" (next page), DeWolfe lures an American psychic researcher to investigate his haunted hometown. For others, like the residents of Montreal, the collision of religion and science was truly a grave concern. In "Anatomically Incorrect," page 28, citizens are outraged as medical students dig up cadavers for dissection.

But, in the end, much like the cycle of life, darkness is vanquished by the light.

Charles Edgar DeWolfe was so sure that Windsor, Nova Scotia, was haunted that he invited a New York psychic researcher to investigate. What the visitor found didn't exactly please his host.

The Ghostbuster

by Robert Damon Schneck



PARAPSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION

Hereward Carrington was a twenty-seven-year-old British-born journalist and amateur magician sent by the American Society for Psychical Research to investigate claims of the paranormal in Windsor. Carrington enjoyed a long and occasionally scandalous career in psychic research. He created one of the first laboratories dedicated to the study of psychic phenomena and wrote over a hundred books on a variety of subjects. He is best remembered, however, as the only investigator to declare controversial Canadian-born medium Mina (Margery) Crandon authentic, though it's widely believed they were having an affair. He died in Los Angeles in 1958 at the age of seventy-eight.

Certainly in the whole world, there is not at present such a field for the psychic investigator, as this town affords. —Charles Edgar DeWolfe

On January 23, 1907, Hereward Carrington, a twenty-seven-year-old British-born journalist and amateur magician from New York City, arrived in Windsor, Nova Scotia, to investigate reports of psychic phenomena. He travelled to the small Maritime town on behalf of the American Society for Psychical Research, which had been receiving letters from Windsor describing a variety of paranormal events: loud knocks, objects that appeared from nowhere and moved by themselves, spirit possession, ghostly voices, and apparitions.

The ASPR, founded in 1885 and dedicated to "the investigation of alleged telepathy, visions and apparitions, clairvoyance ... all kinds of mediumistic phenomena," received numerous letters recounting unusual experiences. But few offered much to the researcher. Most described isolated incidents, involved unreliable witnesses, or provided no supporting evidence. Windsor was different: the occurrences were ongoing, the correspondent, Charles Edgar DeWolfe, could not be easily dismissed, and other witnesses signed statements affirming the accuracy of the accounts.

That evening at the Victoria Hotel, Carrington met DeWolfe, a sixty-seven-year-old lawyer who had served as judge of probate in Windsor since 1881. He was active in the temperance movement, once edited the town newspaper, and was a correspondent for the Halifax *Chronicle*. Married for twenty

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Canada's Jack the Ripper suspect: Dr. Thomas Neill Cream, raised in Quebec and a graduate of McGill Medical School, was hanged in London, *England, in 1892, for the murder of four women; it was believed he killed at least three others in North America* and Britain. The killing pattern was similar to Jack the Ripper's, and both men were active at the same time.

years and the father of two sons, he appeared neither deluded nor the possessor of an impish sense of fun. His letters to the ASPR were detailed and notably humourless, though he was obviously excited about what was happening.

Judge DeWolfe acknowledged the possibility of hoaxing, but felt that most of what he'd seen was authentic. He was familiar with psychic phenomena: From the 1870s to the 1880s, he had given "readings" at public concerts (where he was occasionally heckled) and held successful seances with his wife Cassie. He was considered a talented mesmerist, as well. Though DeWolfe did not regard himself a spiritualist, his thinking had been strongly influenced by spiritualism.

He believed that events in Windsor could be traced to several incidents of violence, particularly the murder of Freeman Harvie in 1906. George Stanley (see sidebar, opposite) was hanged for the crime in August of that year, and the psychic phenomena

The Windsor home (above) of Charles Edgar DeWolfe. No photographs of the judge himself are know to exist.

The Windsor Furniture Factory (right) on Albert Street in Windsor where Judge DeWolfe found psychic phenomena in abundance.

began a few months later. In one incident, a gust of wind blew a hogshead down an alley and onto Water Street, where, wrote De Wolfe,

> it turned at the sidewalk, no one near it, crossed the street in almost a straight line, passed over the curb of the opposite sidewalk, turned a second time in the direction of my property, on Water Street, rolled along the sidewalk, about 75 feet, and then turned again off the sidewalk on to my property.

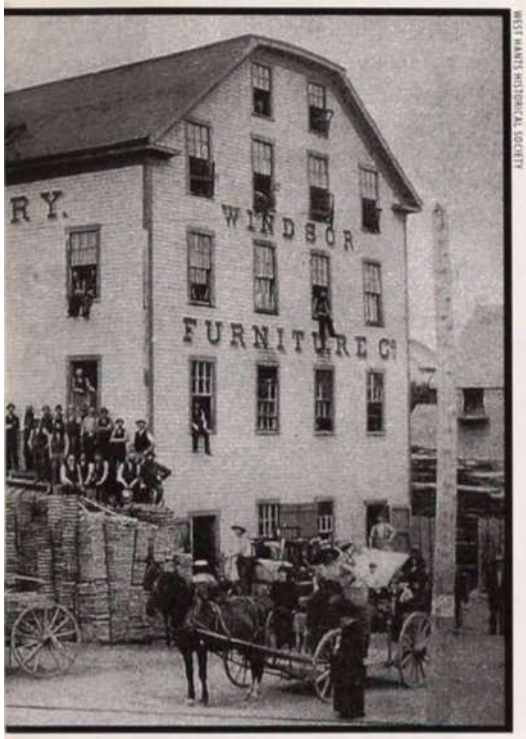
DeWolfe watched the barrel's progress but could find no one responsible for moving it. Two boys came out of a shop and witnessed a groaning voice inside the barrel claiming to be Freeman Harvie. Another time, some men told the judge an empty wooden box they were carrying had become almost too heavy to lift. A group gathered to watch but, frightened, refused to help remove the nailed-down lid. The judge, believing that Harvie had materialized inside, ran for an axe. When he returned he was told that the box had moved and given off groans and knocking noises. A woman said she recognized the murder victim's voice speaking within.

The sheer number of psychic incidents being recorded in Windsor was staggering.

Not all of the spirits hid inside boxes or barrels. In March, DeWolfe had seen a headless phantom in the cellar of a shop ("The groans of the figure were very distressing.") He believed this was Freeman Harvie, who'd been beheaded, but headless ghosts were unusual, even in Windsor. Most common was the movement or sudden appearance of small, ordinary items, thrown or dropped from seemingly nowhere. But antique coins had also appeared as well as electric lightbulbs, which were expensive in 1907 and not likely to be broken for a joke. A number of the latter had been shattered throughout the town. One witness reported having a book wrestled out of his hands by an invisible force while, in other cases, objects moved or disappeared when people were out of the room. The sheer number of psychic incidents being recorded in Windsor was staggering.

Why, then, were such normally rare events happening so frequently and over so wide an area? Spirits couldn't do it alone, DeWolfe believed; human

agents were the cause. Windsor's population, he reasoned, contained an unusual number of unconscious physical mediums, many of them young people unaware of their abilities. Physical mediumship (unlike mental, with spirit voices and inner visions) involves knocks, raps, levitation, ectoplasm (a sort of supernatural ooze), and summoning apparitions and objects that move or materialize. The judge had seen respectable clerks, shop assistants, and students go into trances and begin behaving so strangely that it took all of his skill in hypnosis to calm them.



WEST HANTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Carrington listened to the judge with interest. He was dubious about spirits but eager to witness the phenomena. The next morning, before beginning a tour of the shops, they stopped into the judge's office at 37 Water Street to examine the collection of *apports*, the technical name for the objects materialized through physical mediumship (from the French *apporter*, "to bring"). These were ordinary things: matches, grains of rice, old coins, a stone, and shattered lightbulbs, which Carrington agreed were too expensive to be thrown around for fun.

The investigation began picking up at the grocery store. The grocer, Mr. Murphy, described as "a very quiet man, subdued and rather secretive," showed them a box of eggs that were somehow smashed during the night. But this was less interesting than the large, yellow apple that went sailing past Carrington's head. Carrington turned and saw that it came from the direction of the grocer who was "standing in precisely the place I should have expected to find him, but leaning against the counter with his hands in his pockets, and looking, for some reason, very red in the face." This was the first psychic phenomena that Carrington had ever seen – if it were genuine – but since Murphy could have thrown the apple, he didn't count it as evidence.

Their next stop was the Windsor Furniture Factory, a three-storey wooden structure on Albert Street where the manifestations began and were especially frequent. Several of the young men working there impressed Carrington with their honesty and sincerity, but they also struck him as dazed or possibly stupid. As they climbed to the second floor with one of the young men, knocking noises broke out from the pipes and the walls. On their way down from the third floor, a muffled voice was heard calling "halloo," prompting the man to laugh and remark "gee whiz" under his breath. Back on the first floor, a piece of iron landed at their feet, but the workers denied knowing what it was or where it came from. Then a pile of chairs fell over.

Carrington was keeping an open mind. He had not actually witnessed fraud but neither had he seen anything unarguably paranormal. DeWolfe was delighted. After writing all those letters to the ASPR, he would have looked silly if nothing happened.

When they returned to the furniture factory in the afternoon, the manifestations continued. A small barrel rolled towards them. Then a large iron spike fell to the floor along with a handful of coins, some of them old and corroded, one a slot-machine token labelled "good for one tune." Another was an American nickel with the Indian's head sawed out of it. There was a fad for making scarf pins from these heads, but

George Stanley Gets Ahead

Would an old man sell everything he owned to a complete stranger and vanish? George Stanley claimed that Freeman Harvie, an elderly man from Ellershouse, Nova Scotia, did just that, while Mrs. Harvie was eleven kilometres away in Windsor.

Stanley, recently arrived from London, borrowed a jackknife from an acquaintance, David Fisher, on February 1, 1906, for a job he said he was doing. Next morning, Stanley appeared at Fisher's house with legal papers saying Harvie had sold him his property. Telling Fisher and his son James he was going to Halifax to clear title, he hired them to feed the livestock and maintain the place until he returned. That weekend, after selling some of Harvie's goods, Stanley and the Fishers caroused in the kitchen while callers came and went. No one, however, was allowed into the cellar.

On Monday morning, Edgar McCarthy and Anthony Aker became suspicious. With Stanley not home and David Fisher without a key, they used an axe to open the cellar door. At the base of the stairs they found "the feet of a man protruding out of a pile of potatoes." Harvie had been decapitated, but his head was found inside a bag under an upturned bucket. A bloody knife and handsaw were also discovered.

Stanley was arrested that day. He tried blaming Fisher, but police believed that Stanley stabbed Harvie to death and beheaded him in the cellar. He was convicted on May 30 and hanged at Windsor on August 1, 1906. He blamed his downfall on strong drink and bad company.

George Stanley's real name was William Kavanagh, and he was a native of County Tipperary. In 1906 he was forty-five years old but looked younger (one reporter described him as looking between twenty-eight and thirty) despite having served time in several prisons.

West Hants county was the site of several crimes between 1905 and 1906, but it was Harvie's murder that inspired most of the haunting in Windsor.

—R.D.S.

the judge considered it a symbolic message from the decapitated Freeman Harvie. (Carrington later wrote, "I must confess that my respect for [DeWolfe's] judgement vanished from that moment.") When they went back to the second floor, Carrington got what he had come for.

The judge grabbed his arm and pointed to a pile of rattan rocking chairs "rocking away as though some spirit were indeed occupying them." Carrington had a clear view of the room, which was unoccupied. No human hand could have set them in motion. He later wrote:

> 'Eureka,' I exclaimed to myself, 'at last I have seen a poltergeist in active operation! My trip to Nova Scotia has not been for naught, even though I see nothing else while I am here. I have seen objects move without human contact – and, better still I have seen them start that movement while my eyes were upon them! What satisfaction!'

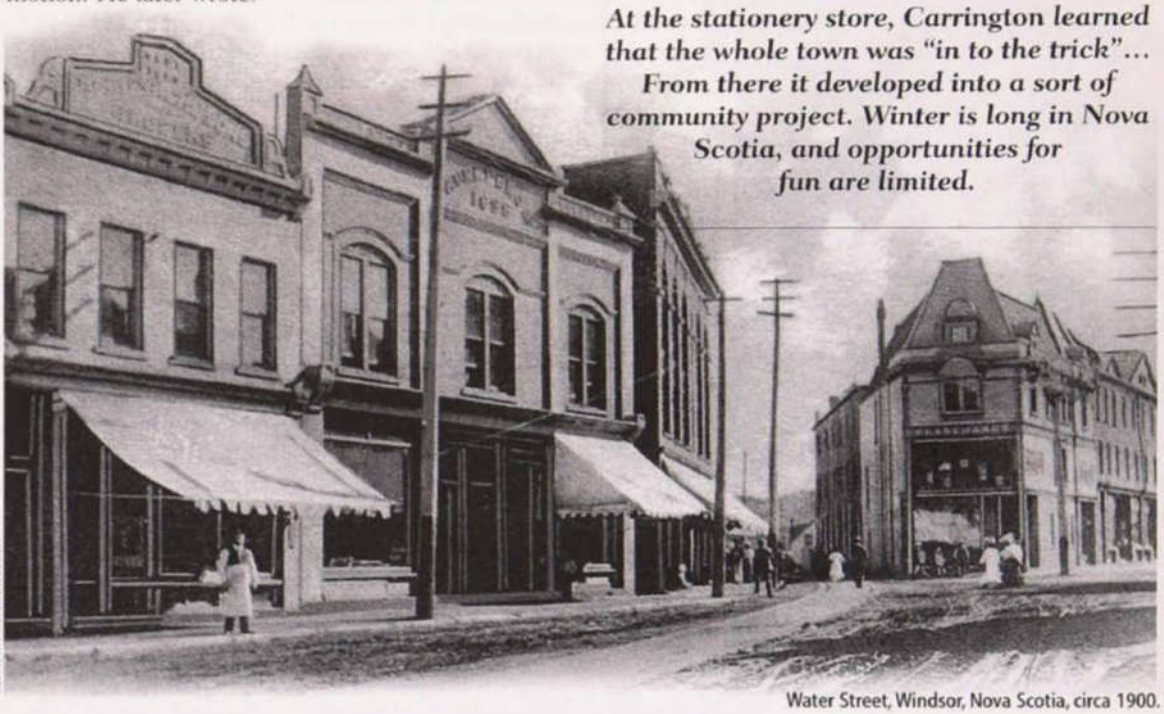
The rockers, however, stood against a pile of stacked furniture. Getting on his hands and knees and crawling beneath the rattan, Hereward Carrington learned the poltergeist's secret. A string was attached to the back of the rocking chair. It was connected to several other chairs and then disappeared down a hole in the floor to the room below. Though disappointed, Carrington was at least certain that nothing paranormal was happening. Someone had taken a lot of trouble to create the illusion.

He returned to find the judge in conversation with a spirit voice that broke into smothered laughter at his approach. The voice was coming from a rubber tube hidden behind a stack of furniture. Like the thread, the tube disappeared through a hole in the floor. Keeping his discoveries to himself for the time being, Carrington went downstairs with the judge. The tricks continued. There were more raps, knocks, flying coins, and falling furniture. One man fell under the control of spirits and insisted that the judge was someone else. Despite being possessed, he never stopped grinning. Carrington played along, not wanting to raise suspicions.

More coins appeared. Stooping over to retrieve them, Carrington looked between his legs and saw a worker kick over a stack of chairs. More objects materialized. While one man diverted their attention, another tossed things – a neat bit of misdirection that the amateur magician in Carrington couldn't help appreciating. There was more: A rope on the first floor was rigged to open a trapdoor on the second. A stack of chairs pulled by threads skittered across the floor. A small panel in a partition allowed objects to appear in unoccupied rooms. It all took teamwork. Given this evidence, Carrington was satisfied that nothing he'd witnessed was paranormal.

Nevertheless, he and the judge visited more shops along Water and Gerrish streets, including the stationery store where a paperweight and inkstand fell to the floor. Though the shop girl admitted she had thrown them, the judge didn't believe her. They left the shop and met two students from King's College who both reported frequent uncanny incidents. Returning to the judge's office together, one of the young men became possessed. He screamed and jumped up, and began kicking the furniture and grinding his teeth. Then an apport, a small piece of paper wrapped in thread, was discovered on the floor. But Carrington noticed the young man's hand, which

At the stationery store, Carrington learned that the whole town was "in to the trick"... From there it developed into a sort of community project. Winter is long in Nova Scotia, and opportunities for fun are limited.



WEST HANTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Water Street, Windsor, Nova Scotia, circa 1900.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Portent of death: In 1862 a man by the name of Carpenter travelled with some people to the Cariboo gold fields. When the party reached the rapids of the Fraser River, Carpenter insisted on hanging his coat on a tree before shooting the rapids; he was lost and drowned. A note found in his coat pocket read, "Arrived this day at the canyon at 10 a.m. and drowned running the canoe down. God keep my poor wife."

had been in his pocket right before he jumped up, shoot out when he screamed. The judge, meanwhile, captured the young man and made mesmeric passes over his forehead to calm him until peace was restored. After the students left, knocking noises issued from a wall that separated the judge's office from the one next door where several young men and women were working. At this point, Carrington decided to get a shave and some fresh air.

In the hairdressing shop on Gerrish Street, Carrington chatted with the barber, Robert Fleming, who had written one of the affidavits confirming the judge's reports. Carrington asked if any of it were true. Fleming laughed. No, he said, his assistant had been playing pranks. They had explained this to the judge many times but he refused to believe it. At the stationery store, Carrington learned that the whole town was "in to the trick," but the girl felt bad for the judge and wouldn't be part of it anymore. Murphy, the grocer, explained that he had thrown the apple; the eggs had broken during shipment. Deputy Sheriff Conlon tossed the lightbulbs (which hadn't cost anything because they were already burnt out). The cases of possession were simply playacting. The ghost in the barrel began as an accident, but it took a little fraud to make it really impressive.

Two boys were playing with the barrel in an alley when it got away from them and rolled into Water Street. Thinking the barrel might hit someone, the boys hid inside a store while the barrel bounced off a telegraph pole, changed direction, and was carried down the icy street by a gale of wind. DeWolfe stood on the sidewalk watching its progress. He assumed spirits had moved it. To continue the deception, a small boy crept into the hogshead when DeWolfe wasn't looking, groaned, and stated that he was Freeman Harvie.

Why hadn't the judge simply looked in the barrel? DeWolfe, the grocer explained, was frightened and wouldn't get close enough to take a good look. Carrington saw that himself; the judge would not look in the room adjoining his office to find the source of the knocking, or go up to the second or third floors of the furniture factory by himself.

The men at the factory admitted everything without hesitation and apparently never considered it anything but a joke. One of them explained how the hoax got started:

> We knew [Judge DeWolfe's] interest in these things, and one day, as he passed the door one of the men opened it and called out ... [his name] as loud as he could. [DeWolfe] jumped [about four feet from the ground] and came in asking if any of us had called out. Of course, we replied that we had not, and he came to the conclusion that [Freeman Harvie] ... had called to him! This gave us an idea, and we followed that up, until we had this whole system rigged up that you see. I guess you saw how everything was worked pretty well.

From there it developed into a sort of community project. Winter is long in Nova Scotia, and opportunities for fun are limited. DeWolfe had actually been banned from stores where his presence made clerks too frolicsome.

Carrington had enough. He wrote the judge a polite note promising to send him a copy of the report and left Windsor for Amherst on the afternoon of January 25 to look into a poltergeist case from the 1870s.

DeWolfe's response to the final report is not known, though several references in it to his "almost inconceivable credulity" could not have been well received. He was certainly not pleased with the investigation and wrote a long letter of complaint, purple with bruised feelings, to Dr. James H. Hyslop, director of the ASPR.

The judge felt that Carrington was too young, did not appreciate his efforts, had treated him shabbily, and bungled the job. DeWolfe took particular exception to the way Carrington carried out his investigation – namely, making independent inquiries and collecting information from people other than himself. He believed that the investigator was actually a trance medium and so wholly unsuited to a place overrun with spirit influences as he was "sure to get more or less muddled about the brain."

The letter ends with a request for Dr. Hyslop to come to Windsor himself as the phenomena were continuing and had entered a new and interesting phase:

> I have reason to believe that Stanford White has been manifesting here, if so, he told me that Mrs. Thaw's evidence is true, and that Thaw would not be convicted.*

Dr. Hyslop declined the invitation but did not regret the ASPR's efforts in Windsor. If accurate, the reports would have been invaluable to their research. If the investigation had not been carried out, what would posterity have made of detailed descriptions of paranormal phenomena written by a reliable witness and supported by signed affidavits?

Charles Edgar DeWolfe was honest, intelligent, highly respectable, and "a good recorder of facts." He was not, however, a keen observer. The judge died in 1914 at the age of seventy-four, but stories about him circulated for years. In a letter dated September 23, 1974, Gwendolyn V. Shand wrote the West Hants Historical Society:

> One of my cousins saw him walking up Hawthorn St. with his pocket on fire. He had stuffed a lighted pipe in his pocket. A passer-by stopped him and helped put out the fire. He had been reading a book as he walked along and was unaware of everything around him. ▣

Robert Damon Schneck writes about the stranger side of life in North America from Brooklyn, New York. He has investigated haunted houses, worked with psychics, and seen one or two things he couldn't explain.

*Millionaire Harry K. Thaw was then on trial for the murder of famed New York architect, Stanford White.

et cetera

Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums, and Misfits Who Brought Spiritualism to America **by Peter Washington. Martin, Secker and Warburg, London, 1993.**

The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the 19th and 20th Centuries **by Ruth Brandon. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1983.**

Anatomically Incorrect: Bodysnatching in the Nineteenth Century

by Matthew Rankin

It was a dilemma. Medical students needed cadavers for dissection. But procuring cadavers was illegal. In nineteenth-century Montreal, there was only one solution. And it was ghoulish.

It is Montreal, deep in the winter of 1862. Griffith Evans, a young medical student at McGill University, is preparing to dissect a human corpse when the calm of the anatomy room is suddenly broken.

Two students burst in through the doors lugging a dead body. Evans sees that it is the naked corpse of an elderly white woman. No explanation is offered for this unexpected interruption, nor is one demanded. Everyone knows.

The two students have, as per usual, illegally exhumed the corpse from some unnamed cemetery somewhere – Côte des Neiges, perhaps, or Mount Royal, or maybe even from a distant graveyard in the countryside. Everybody does it, or pays somebody else to do it – even the medical faculty itself. The two body snatchers are congratulated for unearthing such a fine, fresh specimen, and the corpse is heaved onto the dissection table.

But a problem is on the way.

In walks another student. He looks at the corpse and gasps.

"'Good God!" he shouts, "That is my aunt; my cousin, her son, is down below at the chemical lecture and will be up here soon."

With this, the anguished nephew faints and the dissection room falls into a panic. "What shall we do?" one asks.

"Dissect the skin off the face quickly!"'

As the nephew is being revived, the two students grab their instruments and immediately set about surgically removing the dead woman's face. Recording the incident later in his journal, Evans writes that before very long the young dissectors had rendered the subject so completely unrecognizable that when the bereaved son finally arrived, "he went to see the new white subject, cheerfully joked with the dissectors, congratulated them for their successful adventure," and set about unwittingly dissecting his own mother.

Such were the hazards of morbid anatomy in nineteenth-century Montreal. In truth, the identity of the dead body has always been problematic for human sensibilities. All the feverish turmoil apparent in Evans's story springs from the central problem that, notwithstanding its lifeless state, the corpse still possesses a certain humanity, an identity, and a dignity—for it remains the embodiment of the living person we have lost.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, as more and more students enrolled in medicine, and as surgery became increasingly important to the medical profession, the demand for anatomical subjects far outstripped the number that could be legally provided. Taking their education into their own hands, medical students turned to grave robbing, much to the severe distaste of Montreal high society. How would politicians respond to the needs of the medical schools? Under what circumstances could the stuffy Montreal elite accept that the human corpse could be an object for study and wilful mutilation as well as a symbol of sanctity and human legacy? It would be a stubborn and highly confused evolution.

Indeed, from the very moment it began to evolve in Lower Canada, the anatomist's vocation had social problems. In the late 1700s, students of medicine could not legally practise without having demonstrated a prerequisite knowledge of anatomy—to be drawn from the dissection of human cadavers. Ironically, the procurement of such cadavers was illegal and dissection was punishable as desecration of human remains. As a confounded E.D. Worthington recalled of his student days in the 1830s, "By 'law' [the student] was bound to dissect, by 'law' he could be punished for dissecting. Strange inconsistency!"

Dissection, therefore, was a furtive business. Medical students burgled graveyards and dead houses of their sepulchral inmates and smuggled them back to the university with a surreptitious wink to the night watchman. In the early days, the "resurrectionists" or "sack-'em-up-men," as they were known, were an artful bunch. The corpse was exhumed by night, stripped of its clothes and any jewellery to curtail any formal charges of robbery (the corpse itself not being legally designated as private property), and swiftly whisked away. Evans noted in his journal that the best time to snatch bodies undetected was during a snowfall, for "the descending snow will obliterate the footmarks."

It was not long before the medical schools had created a fairly lucrative traffic in human flesh. Illustrious Montreal anatomist Francis Shepherd claimed in his reminiscences that, by the time he was working as an anatomy demonstrator in the early 1880s, the McGill faculty of medicine was paying body snatchers between "thirty to fifty dollars" per corpse. French-Canadian students with financial worries were said to pay for their tuition in cadavers, while for the rich Anglo brats from Toronto, grave robbing became a wild, rambunctious rite of passage. As Evans described:

> Our English students do it not for economy but for mischievous fun, dare-devilry, they make themselves intoxicated with alcoholics to excite the daring before going to the grave, then they do the work carelessly and in haste and consequently a large proportion of them have been traced.

Indeed, this morbid frolic led to some terribly sloppy and conspicuous misadventures. Dr. Shepherd recalled that students burgling the cemeteries of Mount Royal would wrap the bodies in blankets and toboggan them down the slopes of Côte des Neiges Road. Occasionally there would be an incident in which the body would tumble out into the street in full view of passersby, and students would have to explain that there had been a fatal toboggan-

MCGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

McGill second-year medical students, circa 1901. It wasn't until after 1883 legislation, which regulated the disposal of deceased persons, that medical schools could acquire cadavers for dissection in ways unlikely to shock and appall the general public.

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Born in India, Griffith Evans (1835–1935) graduated from McGill in 1864, then trained as a veterinarian in London. He served with the Royal Army Veterinarian Department both in England and India until 1890. He discovered the cause of surra, a disease fatal to horses and camels. Body-snatching at McGill is discussed in his journals.

ing accident – resulting, suspiciously, in a naked corpse sprawled across the road.

Not surprisingly, such irreverent tampering with the dead would lead to widespread public outrage, especially since anatomy itself was a severely misunderstood profession during this era. Anatomists, surgeons, and dissectors were training themselves to see the body in a very different way from the lay public. They were taught to intellectually divorce the body from all of its religious, cultural, and even personal meanings, and see the body as simply the anonymous object of their work. This objectivity, or "clinical detachment," as it was termed, was essential to the practice of surgery.

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An 1873 McGill graduate, Francis J. Shepherd (1851–1929) pursued further training in Europe before being invited by William Osler to join the McGill staff, where he became professor of anatomy.

The annals of history bring forth many incredible triumphs of such objectivity. At the Montpellier Medical School in Europe, one anatomist dissected his own deceased child before a lecture hall full of students. In the seventeenth century, British clinician William Harvey dissected his father and sister *post mortem*. Even at McGill – Evans' farcical caper notwithstanding – such extreme cases exist. Shepherd recalled a French-Canadian student walking into the dissection room to find his uncle on the table. He asked how much Shepherd had paid for the familial corpse, but then willingly dissected it.

Such a radical way of seeing the corpse made no sense to the public at large. To them, this callous disregard for the humanity of the corpse, its spirit, its dignity, and its sanctity, which they saw so grotesquely at play in bodysnatching and dissection, revealed the immoral and possibly murderous nature of the anatomist. British Canadians in particular were familiar with the dark legacy of William Burke, a Scottish miscreant who, in the 1820s, took to murdering people on the streets of Edinburgh and selling their bodies to the medical schools. Burke was eventually caught, hanged, and sentenced to be dissected in public. The Burke affair naturally became the stuff of legend and cast long shadows of popular distrust upon anatomy, stretching certainly as far as Montreal.

One of the first bodysnatching episodes to inspire civic unrest in Montreal was an incident in Chambly in 1843. The grave robbers had been careless, leaving the body's coffin and clothes strewn rudely about the tombstones. Worse, they had unwittingly stolen the body of an important person, a well-respected barrack sergeant of the Eighty-Fifth Regiment. It was a scandalous affair. The police were called and shortly traced the culprits to their seigneury-house-cum-dissection-room only to find the militiaman's remains already mutilated and heaped in a storage vault. The outraged *Montreal Transcript* thoroughly demonized the students – slandering their dissection room as "a Burking house"[1] – and reverently eulogized the soldier's noble career. Recounting his sacrifices for the Empire and his many military honours, the paper concluded that "the least the soldier could expect ... is that, when consigned to his grave, his remains should lie honoured and undisturbed."

So it was nearly midcentury. Medical schools were growing in size, number, and importance, but the anatomist's vocation was still outlawed and increasingly despised by the chattering classes. A group of Montreal physicians began to petition the government. They had to dissect *somebody*, and if they couldn't dissect dead soldiers with military honours, whom *could* they dissect? After some parliamentary deliberation in Kingston, the Honourable John Simpson submitted an answer: dead immigrants.

It was a shrewd calculation of the conditions under which elite society could tolerate the anatomist's objective view of death. The public boiled over with indignation when an important member of their citizenry or a fondly remembered relative was dishonoured by the anatomist's scalpel. But if the body of some unknown, unmourned person – without family, name, or legacy – were taken to the university and dissected, how could there be a public to outrage? Dead immigrants, foreign and friendless, seemed to be obvious candidates. As member for Huron, William "Tiger" Dunlop asked the House, "What harm is done to him or his relatives who will never know it?"

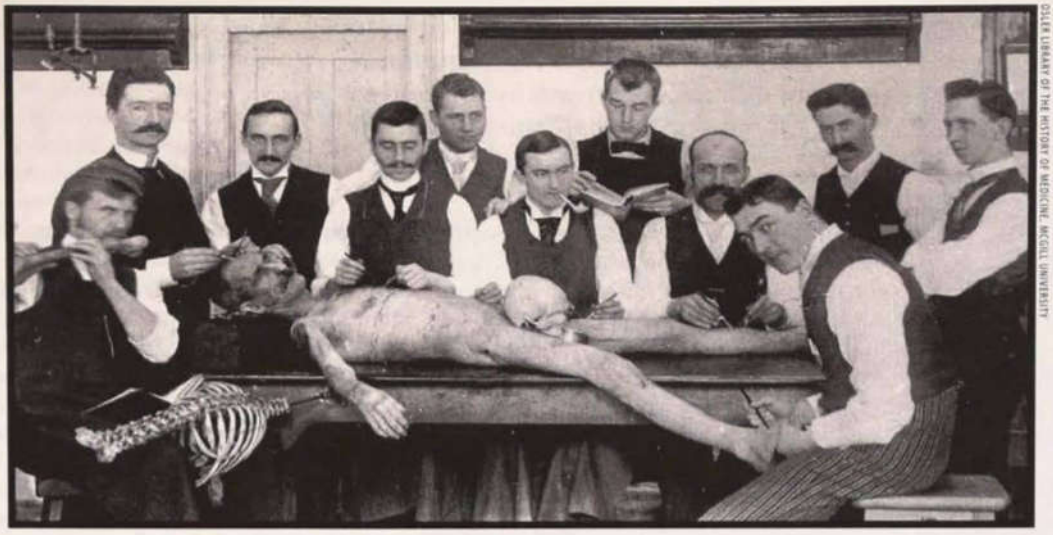
It seemed a brilliant solution, but, all the same, something wasn't sitting well in Kingston. Mr. Nielson, member for Quebec County, Upper Canada, sensed a certain vulgarity in Simpson's bill: "They [immigrants] came here to better their condition – and this is the treatment they are to receive after death?" Several other members also felt that society's charitable obligations to the poor and the friendless extended beyond death and consigning their bodies to the dissectors would be immoral. Perhaps only those to whom society owed no mercy should be reserved for anatomy. As member for Toronto Henry Sherwood reasoned, "The bodies of ruffians executed for crimes may be given over for dissection, but to consign by law the poor and the stranger to such a fate!"

Simpson was unmoved. Waving off his critics, the self-satisfied Simpson continually stressed the

[1] Burke's name had been fashioned into a verb meaning to commit murder for anatomical subjects.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Seaworthy coffin: Charles Coghlan, born in Prince Edward Island in 1841, became a distinguished actor in the United States. A gypsy fortuneteller once told him he would die at the height of his success but would not rest until he returned to his place of birth. In 1898, Coghlan died and was buried in Galveston, Texas. Two years later Galveston was hit by a hurricane, and much of the cemetery where the actor was buried washed out to sea. In October 1908, PEI fishermen found Coghlan's barnacle-encrusted coffin (identified by a silver plaque) floating offshore. It had travelled 4800 kilometres.



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The dissecting room around 1880. One student plays flute on a shinbone; a skull acts as codpiece. Despite the morbidity of anatomical training – or perhaps because of it – students managed to retain a sense of humour.

needs of science and progress. "Regarding the objections urged," he quipped in the House, "as well might the alphabet be closed up and men told to become learned." Simpson found an ally in Dunlop, who was himself a former surgeon. Dunlop summoned the dark spectre of William Burke into the House. "If you do not allow dead bodies to be used," he warned, "the living will be taken, for they will be murdered for what they will bring!"[2]

In the end, however, the plan to exclusively target immigrants for posthumous dissection was aborted. There simply wouldn't have been enough dead immigrants to satisfy the mounting demands of the medical schools. But there were other friendless people. And after rummaging through all quarters of posthumous society for any and all dissectable persons, the Act to Regulate and Facilitate the Study of Anatomy was passed almost unanimously in December 1843, shortly after the incident in Chambly. It amounted to a veritable showcase of Canadian social rejects.

Following in the footsteps of Britain's Warburton Act of 1832, the Canadian Anatomy Act proclaimed that the body of any person who died in the care of a government-funded institution was to be handed over to the medical schools, unless the corpse was claimed, within forty-eight hours, by a "bona fide friend or relative." While not explicitly targeting any one group, the legislation made it clear who could be dissected and who could not. Essentially, anyone who relied on charity – the destitute, the insane, convicts, and even children who died in orphanages – would now find their graves on the dissection table. If the medical schools had a steady supply of dead paupers, it was reasoned, bodysnatching would end, thereby protecting the posthumous bourgeoisie from the indignity of scalpels and sack-'em-up-men. So much for the Great Equalizer. Just as in life, some dead persons were superior to others. Social peace would be achieved by everyone knowing their proper place, including the dead.

The only problem with Simpson's legislation was that it didn't work. If the charities wished to bury their dead instead of donating them to the anatomists, they had every right. The 1843 act had no provisions to force their hand or to punish them for interring their dead inmates, and so, that is largely what they did. As a result, the charitable institutions rendered the legislation almost completely impotent. Finding themselves once again without legal recourse, the anatomists reentered the strange underworld of the anatomy black market.

Grasping at straws, McGill started to root out bodies by way of some exceedingly weird channels. Francis Shepherd admits to having received a few mysterious subjects, at least one of which was riddled with bullet holes, delivered in rail cars from a "no-questions-asked" type of agent. Perhaps even more mysterious was a situation recorded in Griffith Evans's 1862 journal. A group of students snatched a corpse from a country graveyard only to be betrayed by their sleighman when the bereaved family announced a reward for the body's recovery. When the corpse was found at McGill, a humbled board of governors returned it to the family, making great public assurances that from now on they "would not admit any corpse into the dissecting room except through the regular channel." This was an empty promise, but Evans explains just exactly what the board meant: "'The regular channel' is from the United States where plenty of negroes are obtained cheap, packed in crates and passed over the border as provisions or flour." Evans even adds that it was rare for him to ever dissect a white body during his school days at McGill.

As the century wore on, the vast majority of subjects continued to be furnished by the resurrectionists, who became increasingly irreverent and sloppy. In 1858, for example, the corpse of the widow of a certain Captain Spillen of His Majesty's Forty-Third Regiment was audaciously stolen from the dead house of the medical schools' one institutional ally, the Montreal General Hospital. The body had, of course, been claimed, and when the funeral party opened the coffin for display, they found not Mrs. Spillen, but instead two sizable logs of maple wood. As the *Montreal Herald* reported, the mourners did not appreciate the ruse: "A shroud was nicely adjusted over the logs of wood, and on the end of them was placed, with cruel ingenuity, the cap of the deceased lady." This sarcastic device immediately inspired such a profound and infectious lust for vengeance that before very long a

[2] Dunlop even made the provocative pronouncement that he himself would have no objection to having his own corpse dissected – but history can call his bluff: He was buried in a Hamilton cemetery in 1848.

The beggar, the madman, the convict, the fallen woman, and the orphan were officially reserved, by law and by force, for the dissection room.

seething mob was stampeding through the city, rooting out the loathsome perpetrators. Fearing the wrath of this impromptu witch-hunt, the grave robbers dumped the denuded corpse of Widow Spillen into an empty lot on the corner of Ste-Catherine and Guy streets and fled. The English press was indignant.

Perhaps the most notorious bodysnatching caper of the nineteenth century was the robbery of two Roman Catholic nuns from the dead house of a cathedral in Lachine in February 1871. The public frenzy was unparalleled. The Montreal *Gazette*, announcing that "there has never yet been related a case of this kind of a more repulsive nature," was apoplectic with eyewitness reports, interviews with the Lachine townspeople, the sage opinions of the parish priest, furious editorials, and vicious letters to the editor. Perhaps alarmed by the widespread outrage they had aroused, and finding that no medical school that valued its reputation would dare take the contraband nuns, the thieves panicked and hid the bodies in a snowdrift. But for all their crudeness, these resurrectionists made enterprising use of their hiding place. As Shepherd chortled, "The bodies were not discovered until a large reward was offered. The perpetrators of the theft were so clever that they not only got the reward but were never found out. The affair so scandalised the community."

"Scandalised" is an understatement. The English newspapers fulminated; it seemed no miracle of surgery could ever redeem the medical students. Awash with hate and hyperbole, the press variously described them as "ruthless," "heartless," "ghoulish robbers," "consummate scoundrels," and "bands of half-drunken and blasphemous students" whose "disgusting transactions" amounted to "atrocity" and "diabolical sacrilege." Not taking any more guff after the Lachine affair, an anonymous contributor published this vengeful warning in the *Montreal Star* on February 11, 1871:

> BODY SNATCHERS BEWARE
>
> We saw to-day a tremendous weapon just finished for the watchman at the Côte des Neiges Cemetery. The gun is of enormous proportions and will be loaded with about eight ounces of buck-shot. Parties meditating a raid on the above place of burial will do well to recollect the formidable shooting iron now in the hands of the wide-awake watchman. A pot shot gang of grave desecrators would most likely supply the dissecting room with enough subjects for several weeks.

Clearly medical students had become inhuman in popular mythology. The Montreal *Gazette* even alleged on one occasion that they were capable of cold-blooded murder and infanticide. And their notoriety only worsened as the century wore on. By the early 1880s, bodysnatching incidents were binging out of control. Between December 1882 and March 1883, medical historian D.G. Lawrence counted twenty-six reported episodes of grave robbing, and Montreal was fuming. Politicians soon realized they would have to intervene once more.

Pressured by the opposition and the medical community alike, the Conservative government of Premier Joseph-Alfred Mousseau finally passed renewed anatomy legislation with the Anatomy Act of Quebec on March 30, 1883. The act effectively served to reinforce and empower the 1843 legislation with coercion and punishment. Any medical school that acquired bodies from any source but the municipally elected anatomy inspector would be fined as much as $200, and any government-funded charity that refused to hand over its unclaimed dead would have to pay the same amount. The act also made it a lot harder to claim a body. Now they would have to be claimed within twenty-four hours, instead of forty-eight, and only by relatives, not friends. Perhaps as a token gesture, the act required that Protestant and Catholic remains be separated and "decently interred" after dissection – so at the very least the pauper dead were afforded some modest religious rights. But the beggar, the madman, the convict, the fallen woman, and the orphan were now officially reserved, by law and by force, for the dissection room. As for the pious nun, the beloved widow, and the illustrious soldier, the legislation tucked them soundly into their coffins for eternal repose, with reverence and honour.

The Quebec Anatomy Act was a resolute success. There was virtually no public opposition and most charities were successfully coerced. The St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, however, objected and freed itself from being legally bound to the act by giving up its government grant. For a while the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge evaded the new law, interring its dead without renouncing its grant, but it was speedily brought to justice. But despite these isolated cases, the *Canada Medical and Surgical Journal* could announce in March 1884 that not a single case of grave robbing had been reported in Quebec that winter; "The requirements of the Medical Schools," the journal declared, "have been amply met." And with that, the dark arts of bodysnatching were lost to the mists of time.

Matthew Rankin is a graduate student in history at l'Université Laval in Quebec City.

et cetera

Death, Dissection and the Destitute **by Ruth Richardson. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.**

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Strange brew: Sophia Cameron, wife of renowned gold prospector John 'Cariboo' Cameron, died of mountain fever in Richfield, British Columbia, in 1862. She wished *to be buried at home in Cornwall, Ontario, so her husband took* her body back (via the Panama Canal) in a tin coffin filled with alcohol.

by Ann Chandler

Trading Talk

The morning mist hangs gently over the majestic Columbia River. A loud boom slices the silence and a lone duck falls clumsily from the sky. Meriwether Lewis lowers his smoking musket and grunts in satisfaction. The year is 1805.

*"Clouch musket. Wake com ma-tax, Musket."**

Lewis turns to acknowledge the softly spoken compliment from the Chinook chief at his side. Loosely translated, it was: "That is a good musket. I do not understand this kind of musket."

The chief's words, later recorded in Lewis and Clark's journals, are believed to be among the earliest written evidence of the Chinook Jargon, a highly expressive form of verbal communication developed for the purpose of trade in the Pacific Northwest.

Although varying theories exist as to its true origin, it is believed that the jargon began as a form of trade communication between the powerful Chinook tribe at the mouth of the Columbia River and the wealthy Nootkas on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Later, with the arrival of French and English fur traders, trappers, and missionaries, the trade jargon expanded to include words borrowed from French, English, and Salish.

The establishment of the fur trade by the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company set in motion the development and growth of this once minimally used jargon, leading to the theory that it was developed by HBC traders. They found it to be an ideal vehicle of communication with the Indians, whose numerous languages were a struggle to learn and pronounce. Rather than endeavour to learn five or six different native tongues, here was a common medium they could all converse in. By 1875, its use had expanded throughout the Northwest, becoming widely spoken by over 100,000 people each day and quickly picked up by store clerks, housewives, and children.

Begun as an oral form of communication, it soon spawned a birth of Chinook Jargon literature, including over one hundred

*There are many variations of the spelling of this phrase, and the year varies between 1803, 1804, and 1805, depending on the source.

Once spoken by 100,000 people, Chinook Jargon was born of necessity. European traders on the Northwest Coast couldn't – or wouldn't – master the complexities of native tongues. But remnants of the hybrid language whites and First Nations improvised in the nineteenth century still punctuate conversation today.

A Chinook woman on the beach.

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A budding romance between members of two different tribes might rely on Chinook Jargon for its expression of devotion.

dictionaries and numerous books, filled the circles of traditional native storytelling and poetry, and thrived in church sermons and public speeches. A colourful and utilitarian language, Chinook Jargon was used for everything from the Lord's Prayer to recipes for dinner – even an opera or two. It was heard around campfires, in domestic kitchens, and between children at play. It echoed throughout trading posts, logging camps, houses of ill repute, and city shanties in ballads and bawdy drinking songs.

Spanning a region encompassing several thousand kilometres, from Alaska in the north to California in the south, the jargon displayed many variations in pronunciation, spelling, and meaning, based on geographical location, purpose, and the linguistic background of the speaker.

Horatio Hale reported the existence of 252 words in his notes penned as a member of the U.S. Exploring Expedition surveying a portion of the western coast of North America in 1841. He found 18 words to be of Nootkan origin, 41 English, 34 French, 111 Chinook, 38 of doubtful origin, and 10 based on onomatopoeia. Later, an 1863 dictionary prepared by George Gibbs and published by the Smithsonian Institute listed 500 known words. Words of Chinook and French origins had apparently doubled by this time, and words of Salish origin numbered thirty-nine. New words were introduced as more Europeans arrived with objects and activities that the natives had no words for. Sometimes an entire descriptive phrase would be needed to explain something of European origin. For example, the Chinook Jargon equivalent for the English word *vaccination* translated as: "in arm it is good against smallpox."

Rich in idioms, the expressive jargon contained no plurals, gender, or tense, but was capable of expressing a wide range of concepts with a basic vocabulary. Plural was generally not distinguished except by adding *hyu (many)* for emphasis. In general, verb tense was inferred by its context, but when absolutely necessary to distinguish time, modifiers were used, such as *alta (now)*, *tahlkie (yesterday)*, *chee (lately)*, or *alkie (soon)*. Time duration could also be indicated by prolonging the sound of a word: *laly (time)* could be *la-a-a-aly (a long time)*.

Simple and often literal in its approach to communication, the jargon had its humorous side. Some of its words were onomatopoetic, imitating sound, like *liplip (to boil)*, *tintin (the ringing of a bell)*, *tiktik (watch)*, or *tumtum (heart)*. Some words were adopted according to the human character belonging to the name, such as *pelton* or *pilton*, meaning *foolish*, derived from the name of a deranged person named Archibald Pelton whom Indians saw at Astoria.

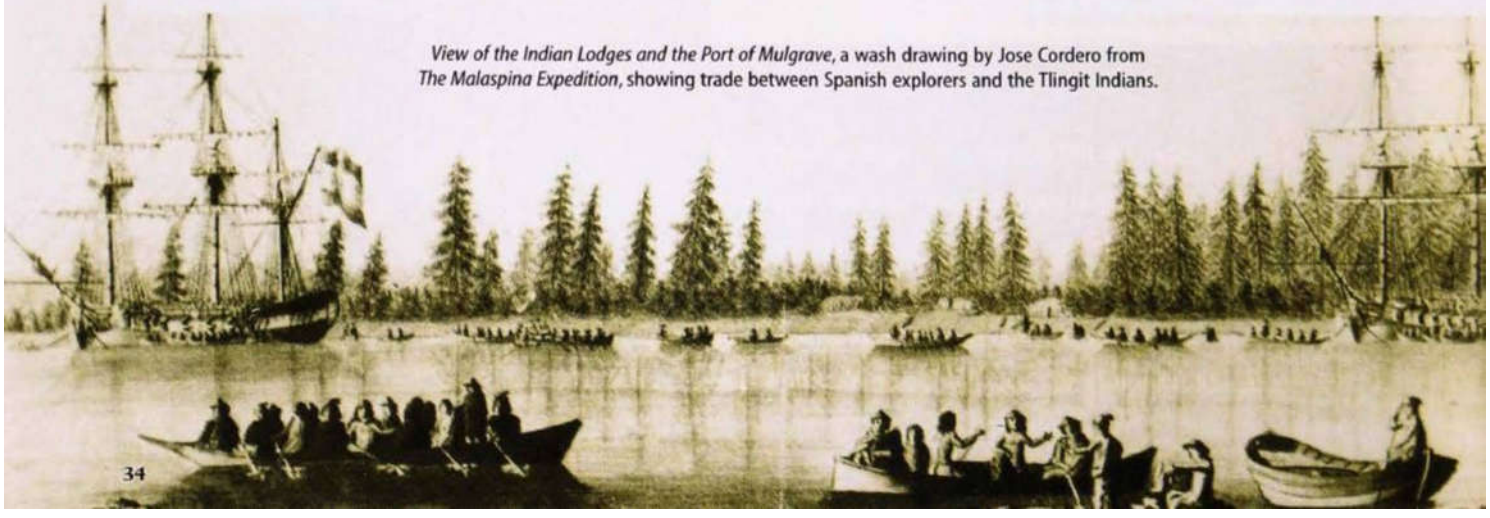
Words were joined and compounded to have new meaning and make up the deficiencies in the vocabulary. Numbers higher than ten (except 100) were formed simply by joining two number words; for example the word for 20 *(moxt tahtlum)* was formed by joining the words for 2 *(moxt)* and 10 *(tahtlum)*. The word for *God (saghalie tyee)* was a combination of *saghalie (high)* and *tyee (chief)*. *Bible* was *saghalie tyee yaka book (high chief his book)*.

Facial expression and gestures embellished or slightly altered the meaning of a word. A great deal could be expressed by mere stress of one's voice; a question simply involved rising intonation or beginning the phrase with *kloshe spose (good if)*. Meaning was also highly dependent on word order. "Mika kumtux Chinook wawa?" was "Do you understand Chinook?", but "Mika kumtux wawa Chinook?" was "Do you speak Chinook?"

A given word could be used in different situations, depending on the social and linguistic context. For example, *tumtum (heart)* as a noun could mean opinion, memory, purpose, etc., but as a verb could mean to think, to will, to believe, etc. The same word might be spelled several different ways, or have several meanings according to the area or speaker. The word *kloshe (good)* was known to have ten different spellings and forty-two different meanings.

An element of phonetic compromise arose when regular users of the jargon had difficulty with sounds contributed by other tongues. The Indians found the *f* of the French and English language difficult to master, so it was modified to *p*, such as *pish (fish)* or *piah (fire)*. The *r* became *l*, such as *glease (grease)* or *lope (rope)*, or disappeared altogether at the end of a word. The English had difficulty expressing the guttural sounds of the Indian words and smoothed them over. Words of French origin are easily recognized, for almost all begin with *l*, a result of the blending of the French article *le* or *la* into the beginning of the word, such as *lamoota (sheep* or *le mouton)*,

ANN CHANDLER



View of the Indian Lodges and the Port of Mulgrave, a wash drawing by Jose Cordero from *The Malaspina Expedition*, showing trade between Spanish explorers and the Tlingit Indians.

lamonti (mountain or *la montagne)*. Some English words appear as phonetic forms, such as *tahla (dollar)* and *spose (suppose)*. Other words are unique to the jargon, having no specific linguistic source, but formed as a result of sound or peculiar invention.

In its early stages, when the jargon lacked a written form, words often became modified according to how they were heard and repeated, as in *cole (cold)* and *tanse (dance)*.

Over time the language evolved, reflecting the changes in population, society, and the diverging needs of its speakers. George C. Shaw's dictionary notes that by 1909, its year of publication, numerous French words had been dropped. "About thirty words are in use now, and these will soon be dropped, as they are seldom used, except by the old folks." Generational differences emerged as many words used by the older generations were dropped and new words were added by younger speakers adapting the jargon to their own needs.

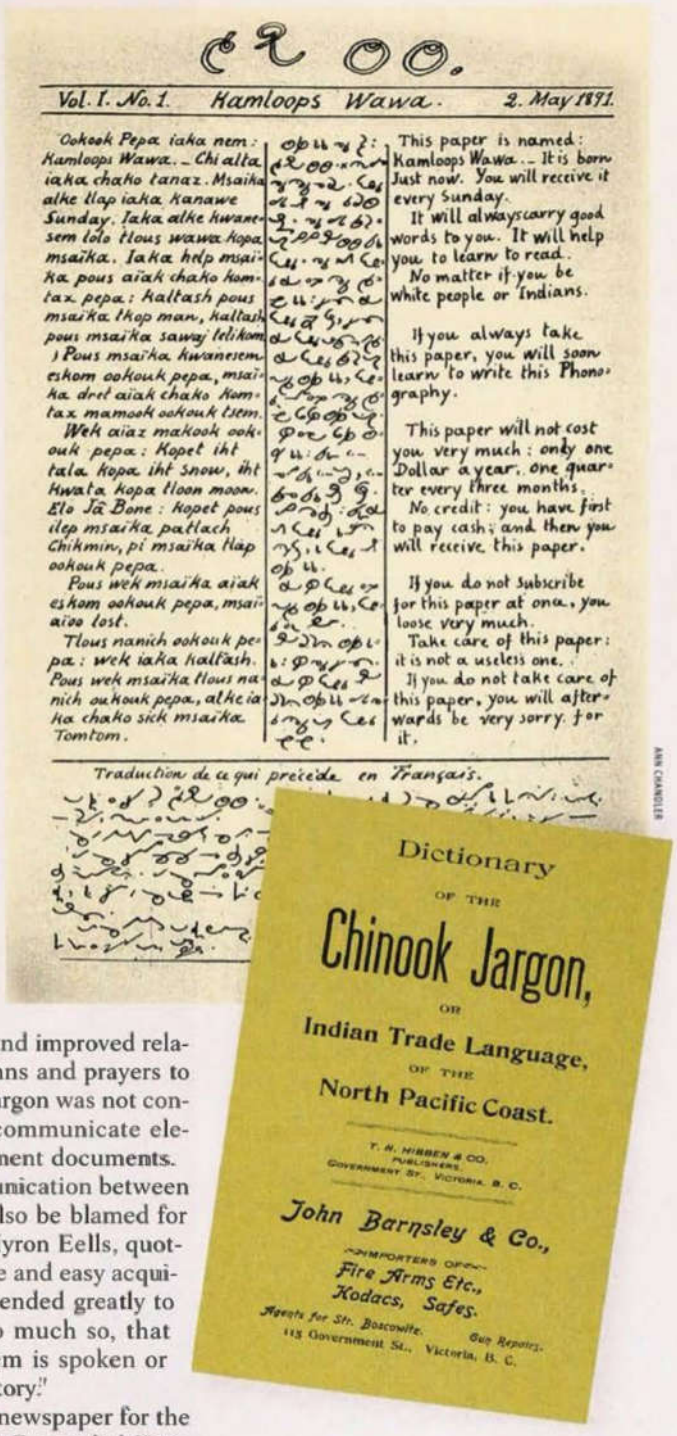
The jargon facilitated trading of more than just material goods. A budding romance between members of two different tribes might rely on Chinook Jargon for its expression of devotion. Each stumbling over the other's tribal tongue, they simply chose a mutual language that was easier for both to master. Continuing to speak it after their marriage, they raised children who knew no other language than Chinook Jargon.

Employed by Indians to communicate with neighbouring tribes, the jargon not only enabled fur traders and missionaries to communicate in a sometimes hostile cultural atmosphere, but was occasionally credited with aiding in the reduction of hostilities caused by misunderstandings between tribes. Differing tribal languages contained harsh pronunciations that English and French speakers had difficulty mastering. Early settlers found the jargon useful for establishing communication with their Indian neighbours, and soon discovered that the ability to converse in a mutually comprehensible medium fostered an atmosphere of trust and improved relations. Missionaries quickly learned the jargon, translating hymns and prayers to enable the Indians to participate in church services. Chinook Jargon was not considered a highbrow form of communication, but one could communicate elegantly in the jargon, as evidenced in the translation of government documents.

Although the jargon can be credited with improving communication between tribes and between the natives and the white traders, it can also be blamed for the unwillingness of the traders to learn the native tongues. Myron Eells, quoted in the introduction to Shaw's dictionary, said, "Its prevalence and easy acquisition, while of vast convenience to traders and settlers, has tended greatly to hinder the acquirement of the original Indian languages; so much so, that except by a few missionaries and pioneers, hardly one of them is spoken or understood by white men in all Oregon and Washington Territory."

A Catholic priest, Father Jean LeJeune, began an unusual newspaper for the benefit of his native parishioners in the Kamloops region of B.C. entitled *Kamloops Wawa*. Because natives were not familiar with printed Chinook Jargon, Father LeJeune used the characters of Duployan, a French form of shorthand, to represent the sounds of the words. The newspaper was issued regularly until 1904. The first issue, printed in May 1891, opened with the following:

This paper is named Kamloops Wawa. It is born just now. You will receive it every Sunday. It will always carry good words to you. It will help you learn to read. No matter if you be white people or Indians. If you always take this paper, you will soon learn to write this phonography. This paper will not cost you very much, only one dollar a year, one quarter every three months.


Vol. I. No. 1. Kamloops Wawa. 2. May 1891.

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No matter if you be white people or Indians.

If you always take this paper, you will soon learn to write this Phonography.

This paper will not cost you very much: only one Dollar a year, one quarter every three months.

No credit: you have first to pay cash; and then you will receive this paper.

If you do not subscribe for this paper at ona, you loose very much.

Take care of this paper: it is not a useless one.

If you do not take care of this paper, you will afterwards be very sorry for it.

Traduction de ce qui precede en Français.

ANN CHANDLER

The first edition (top) of the *Kamloops Wawa*, May 2, 1891. Initiated by a Catholic priest, Father Jean LeJeune, for his native parishioners in the Kamloops, B.C. region, the paper was issued regularly for the next thirteen years.

Dictionary of the Chinook Jargon, published in Victoria in 1899.

LeJeune's publication contained births, deaths, marriages, and church and local news. It also contained lessons on reading and writing, and proved highly successful in teaching the natives to read and write both Chinook Jargon and English.

The jargon began to fall into disuse in the early 1900s when white settlers increasingly outnumbered the native tribes. Speakers of native Indian tongues prided themselves on their ability to speak English, using their tribal language and Chinook with less frequency. Native children entering the residential schools were prevented from speaking any native tongues, including the jargon, and soon dropped all but a few words from their vocabulary.

Despite the slow but continual decline of the use of the jargon in the first quarter of the twentieth century, it persisted in small geographical pockets. As recently as the 1970s, it was still used in church services in some northern B.C. communities, and for many years it was used in the traditional school cheer at the University of British Columbia.

Chinook Jargon leaves its legacy in many place names in the Pacific Northwest, such as *Skookumchuck Narrows (strong water)*, *Cultus Lake (worthless)*, and *Canim Lake (canoe)*, and still colours our everyday speech with words like *potlatch (gift)*, *saltchuck (saltwater)*, and *skookum (strong)*.

Although few, if any, original fluent speakers of the jargon survive today, some select groups are determined not to let it fade into the dusty annals of history. Interest in its preservation has reached new heights, with the birth of Internet websites and the formation of organizations. More than just words, the jargon is a creation of cross-cultural communication in which ancient oral history and culture are deeply embedded.

Ann Chandler is a writer living in New Westminster, B.C.

et cetera

A Voice Great Within Us by Charles Lillard with Terry Glavin. New Star Books, Vancouver, 1998.

Histories and glossaries of Chinook Jargon can be found at <www.hiyu.net> and at <http://home.attbi.com/~chinookjargon/>.

by Susan Fisher

Unauthorized cameras were prohibited in the trenches. But Jack Turner broke the rule. His forbidden photographs capture the war to end all wars in ways both poignant and frightening.

Jack Turner (left) and Lee Allan, 1917.

All photographs courtesy Prince Edward Island Archives and Records Office.

En route to Bologne; cattle car to England, 1919.

Jack Turner's War

Jack Turner won no medals during World War I, but he did make history. For four years, this ordinary young man from a tiny farming community in Prince Edward Island smuggled a camera with him wherever he went. This was strictly forbidden. For one thing, the enemy could learn valuable information through photographs. Luckily for posterity, however, Jack ignored all orders to turn in cameras. Today, the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island holds ninety-nine of Jack Turner's images taken during his 1915–1919 enlistment with the Second Canadian Siege Battery. They are powerful photographs that put the viewer straight into the muddy chaos and dread of frontline action, as well as the

Not an actual scene, this is a composite of two pictures of the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele.

When Jack wrote home he asked friends and family to send cigarettes—their code for film. … His fiancée sent film concealed in fruitcakes.

calmer interludes of a soldier's life.

Although cameras were illegal, many soldiers and officers surreptitiously snapped their way through the Great War. Says Carol Reid, collections manager of the Canadian War Museum archives, which holds a couple of thousand amateur photographs from the First World War of varying quality: "There's no doubt of it. Jack Turner's photos are extremely good."

The war, in fact, stimulated a boom

in photography, according to Andrew Rodger, acting chief of the art and photography section of the National Archives of Canada. Kodak even advertised a vest-pocket model as "The Soldier's Kodak," with the words "Make your own picture record of the War." Sales of this compact camera boomed in Britain between 1914 and 1915. Jack Turner's camera was small, too – only two inches by three inches (drawing on page 36 is actual size) – but German

Making souvenirs; gas shelter in back, Lievin, 1917.

Camp in England, 1915.

made. Throughout the war, he carried it in a pocket fashioned under his sleeve. Even during a three-day hospital stay, he trusted the camera to no one and hid it beneath his pillow.

Jack spent two and a half of his four war years on or near frontlines and slogged through some of the war's most legendary battles: Ypres, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge. He remembered Passchendaele as the worst. In an early 1980s CBC-TV interview, he said, "It was November, the rainy season was on. Every shell hole around – and there was dozens, hundreds – full to the brim with water. If you fell in there, you would never get out." Bone-chilling, torrential rains fell, forcing soldiers to sleep, fight, and drown in mud; it clogged rifles, spoiled food, and impaired troops. Nonetheless, Jack captured some graphic images of the chaos in which his compatriots lived and died.

To escape letter censors, when Jack wrote home he asked friends and family to send cigarettes – their code for film. "I was kinda a moral young fella then," and didn't smoke, he said. His fiancée, Dona Dennis, sent him film concealed in fruitcakes. Developing film was a daunting challenge, but Jack found a way in dark, abandoned cellars near his placements. Leah Gailbraith, Jack's granddaughter, said that once he was developing film in a foxhole when the force of a nearby exploding shell blew out his candle. He continued on, guessing at the critical developing times, and the photos somehow turned out. On leave in England, he left film and prints with friends and purchased developing chemicals to take back to the front. In fact, Jack said he carried some of those supplies with him for sixteen months before he got his first leave. He had no idea that his images would be making history. "It never crossed my mind," he said. "I was just taking them to suit meself."

Brenton Harold "Jack" Turner was born September 24, 1889, in the village of O'Leary, P.E.I. At thirteen, he began photographing with a simple box camera. Many of his pre-war photos captured details of everyday life in rural P.E.I., including a horse-drawn road grader, local boat races, woodcutters, and storefronts.

First position for the Battle of Vimy, April 1917.

The German Red Cross carrying Canadian wounded during the Battle of Canal du Nord, September 1918.

Grave, Delville Wood, November 1916. The grave is bordered with hand grenades.

Cloth Hall, Ypres.

Jack had no idea that his images would be making history. "It never crossed my mind ... I was just taking them to suit meself."

Jack worked as a clerk in his father's general store, H.W. Turner's, on O'Leary's Main Street. At twenty-six, he enlisted. He returned to P.E.I. after the war and married his sweetheart, Dona, in 1919. "I always wanted to go farming," he said, and so that's what he did for the next thirty-five years. During those busy decades, Jack abandoned photography. He was approaching sixty when he picked up a camera again. A converted greenhouse in his farmyard served as his studio and darkroom until a few years before his death at 100 years of age.

At eighty-nine, Jack was asked what he remembered about his war days. "I wouldn't have missed it for a good bit," he replied. "Every night that I don't get to sleep, I go over the whole thing in my mind." Although he was a staunch member of the local legion, Jack confessed that he seldom turned out for Remembrance Day ceremonies. "It looks as though you're trying to show off to a certain extent, and I don't like that."

It seems that Jack wasn't the only soldier in his unit taking illicit photos. According to Boyde Beck, curator of history and exhibits at the P.E.I. Museum and Heritage Foundation, one of Turner's officers, Temple Hooper, also had a camera, as did a battery sergeant, John MacKay. Furthermore, a gunner named Percy Macnevin kept a fairly detailed journal. Says Beck: "Between them all, I'd submit that theirs was the best documented small unit in the entire CEF [Canadian Expeditionary Forces]." ◙

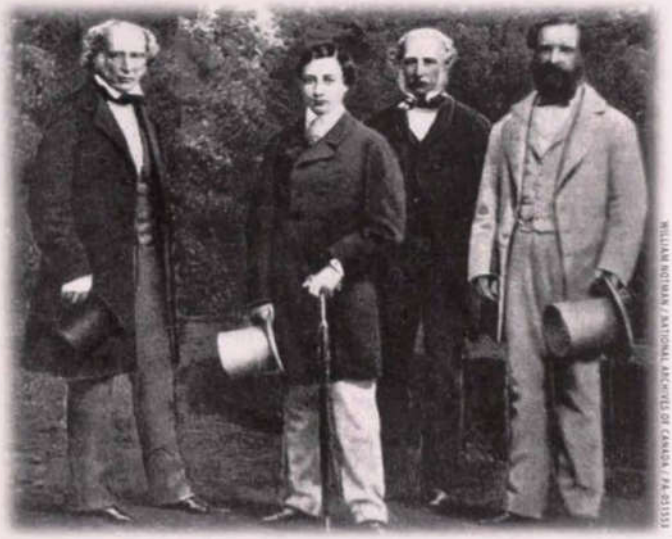
Susan Fisher is a writer living in Carleton Place, Ontario.

et cetera

More of Jack Turner's forbidden World War I photographs can be found at <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/turner/>.

When Queen Elizabeth II visits Canada this October, she will be greeted everywhere by the maple-leaf flag. But it was her great-grandfather's visit in 1860 that entrenched the maple leaf as a distinctly Canadian symbol. by Michael Westaway McCue

The Monarch & the Maple



WILLIAM JOHN WYATT/NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA/PA-121151

The Prince of Wales in front of the Montreal home of Sir John Rose (who would become Canada's first finance minister), August 29, 1860. Left to right: Sir Edmund Head, governor general of British North America; the Prince of Wales, Major-General Bruce, and the Duke of Newcastle, who was charged by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to keep an eye on their sometimes wayward son.

The stylized red maple leaf in the center of the Canadian flag is one of the most recognized national symbols in the world. Its presence inspires thoughts of a Calgary rodeo, the *Bluenose*, or Rue Sainte-Catherine. However, it does not stir memories of a husky rake of a king, remembered as Edward VII, though the monarch and the sylvan emblem are intertwined through happenstance.

After the Crimean War (1854–1856), a conflict in which a clearly identifiable Canadian presence contributed greatly to the Imperial military effort, Queen Victoria asked how she might show her gratitude. Popular Canadian sentiment was for the pomp and circumstance of a visit by the matriarch. While Victoria's uncle, Prince William, later King William IV, and her father, Prince Edward, had visited Canada in military capacities, a true official state visit by a reigning monarch had never occurred. A *London Daily News* editorial complained of only having "French, Dutch, and Russian dignitaries to fete," and pined for a luminary of their own. The periodical went so far as to express feelings of neglect. Citing health concerns and the rigours of a transatlantic voyage, Victoria declined. However, Canada had a backup plan.

On news of Her Majesty's reply, the *South London Journal* proclaimed "A Queen, if not – a Prince!" The prince was Victoria's eldest son, Edward, Prince of Wales. Only eighteen years old in 1859, Edward was already a colonel as well as an accomplished traveller, having studied for six months in Rome and represented the Empire during an official visit with Pope Leo XIII. The city of Toronto petitioned Victoria to allow Edward to visit Canada. Parliament delivered a May 4, 1859, address supporting the proposition as well. His trip would coincide with two significant events – the laying of the last stone in the Victoria Bridge in Montreal and the dedication of the new Parliament Building in Ottawa. The Queen consented, and the *South London Journal* predicted a "most triumphant and unprecedented success."

On July 9, 1860, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales departed Southampton on the battleship HMS *Hero*, arriving in St. John's on July 23. Slowly he made his way from colony to colony (Canada was not yet divided into provinces), stopping in Halifax, Fredericton, and Charlottetown. Upon his arrival in Quebec City and Montreal, each city threw a welcome of grand proportions. "No dead cats, a broken bottle, or an old boot" were to be found, wrote one newspaper of the preparations. In the latter city, Edward announced that "Canada may be proud that within her limits two races of different languages and habits are united ... by a common patriotism." However, the common progeny of these two races was in somewhat of a quandary.

Those who had come to constitute the Canadian people had symbols that proclaimed their origin – the English had the rose, the Scots the thistle, the Irish the shamrock, and the French the white lily. But by 1860, Canada had been in existence in one form or another for over two hundred years. Many people had to reach back generations for an emblem that signified their heritage. What would those who believed themselves to be "Canadians" use? The beaver was the original symbol of Canada, featured prominently on Canadian coats of arms since the early seventeenth century, but there was a limit to what one could do

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR / NA 3629

The first official royal visit to Canada began in St. John's, Newfoundland, on July 23, 1860. Edward spent much of the rest of the summer travelling through Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Province of Canada. New roads, railways, and steamship travel permitted many to see the prince, while the telegraph allowed others to read daily updates of his tour.

with the semiaquatic rodent on a lapel.

The question became more urgent with the impending royal visit. At a public meeting in Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall on August 21, 1860, in advance of the prince's arrival in the city, a motion was put forward by Dr. James H. Richardson that all native Canadians joining in the procession wear the maple leaf "as the emblem of the land of their birth." The motion was passed.

The decision was far from arbitrary. As early as the seventeenth century, a companion of La Salle praised the sap of the maple as manna from Providence that made Indian corn palatable in times of little meat. Realizing the importance of such a commodity, the *habitants* quickly mastered the manufacture of maple syrup. As early as 1805, the Quebec *Gazette* suggested the leaf of this essential tree as an emblem for French Canada. And the next year *Le Canadien* declared it a "suitable emblem for Canada."

> *The tree – the maple ... at first young and beaten by the storm, pines away, painfully feeding itself upon the earth. But it soon springs up, tall and strong and faces the tempests and triumphs over the wind which cannot shake it any more. The maple is the king of our forest; it is the symbol of the Canadian people.*

So pronounced the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society in 1834. Ludger Duvernay, the founder of the society, had moved the previous year to institutionalize the connection between the maple and the French by choosing the leaf as the society's emblem. On June 24, 1836, statesman and society member Denis Benjamin Viger also spoke enthusiastically on behalf of making the symbol inclusive Canada-wide. In 1848, the journal *Maple Leaf* stated that it was named after the "chosen emblem of Canada," calling it the "pride of the forest land."

Thus the leaves of the genus *Acer*, which had been promoted as a suitable symbol of Canada long before the Toronto meeting, were now, with Edward's visit, quickly employed in public displays as a symbol of the Canadian people, not just of an organization. In Montreal, the silver trowel given to HRH to spread the mortar for the Victoria Bridge's last stone was decorated on its edge with the rose, shamrock, thistle, and maple leaf. A procession in Toronto featured representatives of "Canadians" wearing silver maple leaves, while others wore those supplied by nature. Women all along Edward's route wore silver maple-leaf brooches. Even the prince was seemingly aware of the maple's new status as his retinue china was adorned with maple leaves. In ceremonies inaugurating Toronto's Horticultural Society's grounds, the prince planted a maple tree.

The emblem gained in stature and acceptance quickly in the ensuing years. In 1867 Alexander Muir penned *The Maple Leaf Forever* as a Canadian national anthem. The designs for the arms of Quebec and Ontario, granted by royal warrant May 20, 1868, each incorporated a sprig of three maple leaves. Although the choice was not without controversy (it was argued that the emblem's three leaves had religious connotations), by 1876 the maple leaf started appearing on coins, and the leaf became fixed as a national symbol of Canada. On February 15, 1965, the obvious was codified after thirty-three days of parliamentary debate when the red maple-leaf flag was inaugurated as the national flag of Canada.

Michael Westaway McCue holds a master's degree in political science from Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts. His story, "Robert Borden's Siberian Adventure," appeared in the December 2001/January 2002 edition of the *Beaver*.

et cetera

I Stand for Canada: The Story of the Maple Leaf Flag by Rick Archbold. Macfarlane, Walter and Ross, Toronto, 2002.

Edward the Caresser: The Playboy Prince Who Became Edward VII by Stanley Weintraub. Free Press, New York, 2001.

A history of royal visits to Canada can be found at <http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/royalvisit2002/history_overview_e.cfm>.

Reviews

Featured Books

■ **The Age of Sail: Master Shipbuilders of the Maritimes**
by Stanley T. Spicer
Formac Publishing, Halifax, 2001
144 pp., illus., $29.95 paper

■ **The Invisible War: The Untold Secret Story of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Signal Corps, 1944–1946**
by Gil Murray
Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2001
302 pp., illus., $24.99 paper

■ **Louis Riel v. Canada: The Making of a Rebel**
By J.M. Bumsted
Great Plains Publications, Winnipeg, 2001
334 pp., $24.95 paper

Sail Away

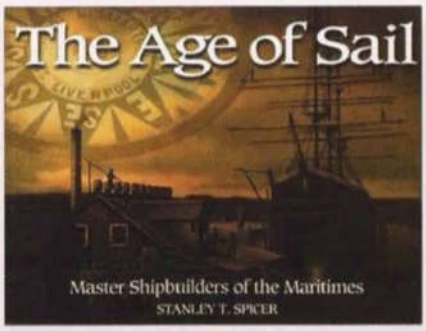
The Tall Ships Festival of 2000 saw huge crowds thronging the waterfront of Halifax, Nova Scotia, as thousands came to see the magnificent sailing vessels on display. Maritimers in particular have a deep and abiding love for sailing ships. Much of our history is rooted in the days of graceful wooden vessels that caught the wind and plied the seas in trade, exploration, or military pursuits. Over 26,000 sailing ships were launched in the Maritimes from 1820 to the turn of the last century. Now this aspect of our history has been brought to illumination by author Stanley T. Spicer in ***The Age of Sail: Master Shipbuilders of the Maritimes***.

Ships brought explorers, settlers, and supplies to this New World; ships carried cargoes for trade in other lands and helped to build (and ruin) many a fortune. Spicer's approach in considering the Maritimes' age of sail is to devote each chapter to a particular builder and ship owner of the region, from Joseph Cunard's rise and fall in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, to the Peakes and Yeos of Prince Edward Island, to the successes of the Killam family, whose fleet sailed from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

The numbers of vessels built during the Maritimes' age of sail are particularly impressive considering the manual labour involved in construction, from hewing of trees into planks, spars, and masts, to the miles and miles of canvas sewn for sails. A full-rigged ship required some ten thousand yards of canvas for its sail, which could be made by a crew of twenty sail makers, working twelve-hour days, six days a week for four weeks.

All too often, due in part to the rose-coloured cameras of moviemakers, the days of sailing ships are perceived as romantic, swashbuckling, and adventurous. The real story is less glamorous: we know from letters and records that life at sea was difficult, frequently uncomfortable, and oftentimes dangerous. Imagine going over the rail of a sailing vessel, stripped of clothing and attached to your vessel only by a double bowline, while you attempt to reconnect the ship's tackle to her rudder so that steering control can be regained. Aaron Flint Churchill, ship's mate on the *Research*, repeated this action eight times during a particularly nasty crossing of the Atlantic during a November storm in 1866. Spicer writes that not only did Churchill continue to sail on ships for many years after his ordeal in the November storm, he established the Churchill line of steamships in Savannah, Georgia. Churchill was one of the fortunate sailors. So, too, was the *Research* a lucky, if limping, vessel that made it to port. Countless ships and lives from Maritime ports have been lost to the brooding and tempestuous seas of our world.

Spicer, who lives at Spencer's Island, Nova Scotia, on the upper Bay of Fundy, has written a dozen books on Maritime history and lore. His fascination with sailing vessels and their role in Maritime development stretches back over many years. In 1997 he completed cataloguing those schooners, barques, and other ships built at ports around the Bay of Fundy, an inventory of some eight thousand vessels. Spicer's meticulous research and fine storytelling are augmented by the bounty of illustrations that accompany the text. More than a hundred and fifty paintings and photographs, many of them archival, create a visual witness to the craft that was so essential to Maritimers of the nineteenth century.



Reviewed by **Jodi DeLong**, a Nova Scotia writer.

In Oz

Former journalist Gil Murray twice volunteered for unknown duty overseas in World War II. Second time lucky, he found himself part

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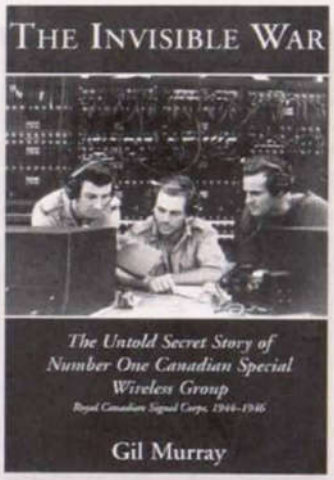
of a top-secret wartime signals interception group of 336 boisterous fellow Canadians collectively known as ICSWG or "the Swiggers." Formed in 1944, this eclectic group trained just north of Victoria on the Saanich Peninsula, then was sent more than twenty-thousand kilometres via San Francisco to Darwin, Australia. The group's orders were to relieve the exhausted Australian Number 3 Special Wireless Unit that had been monitoring signals in intelligence traffic in the southwest Pacific since early in 1942.

In early December 1941, the Australians had broken the Japanese diplomatic code and so knew a Japanese attack was imminent. That attack came on December 7 at Pearl Harbor. As Murray writes in ***The Invisible War: The Untold Secret Story of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group***, "most experts on the Pacific War now argue that radio intelligence was by far the most effective of the whole range of worldwide intelligence and security activities of the Allied war effort." Signals information collected in Australia played a crucial role in the defence of that country, as well as in the Coral Sea Battle, the Battle at Midway, and the assassination of Admiral Yamamoto at Bougainville Island. Enter "Wethey's Commandos," who, for nearly a year in Darwin, Northern Australia, pulled 80,000 messages per day "out of the air" among the one million message groups reporting per diem to the Central Bureau in Brisbane, the clearing house for the southwest Pacific area.


THE INVISIBLE WAR
The Untold Secret Story of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group
Royal Canadian Signal Corps, 1944-1946
Gil Murray

Facing Australia in the Indonesian islands were a million Japanese troops who in 1942 had launched more than sixty attacks on Darwin, rendering the harbour unusable and forcing the evacuation of the town's population. ICSWG became the eyes and ears of the Australians in the final stages of the Pacific War, with radio intelligence greatly shortening the war and leading to the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

It took more than thirty years before the veil of wartime secrecy could be lifted on this Canadian military service to Australia and fifty-six years for this account to come out. Gil Murray, no doubt prepped by twenty years as information officer of McMaster University, brings a delicious sense of humour and a truly poetic descriptive ability to bear on the long, boring sea voyages on either end of the Darwin caper. There was, it seems, never a dull moment as these irrepressible Canadian soldiers pursued solace in movies, the wet canteen, and mail from home. In Darwin, they worked hard on signals interception, but between shifts were always vying for leaves to invade the Australian social scene. The marital impact of this group was much like that of the Canadian First and Second Divisions on the English countryside.

Murray delves into several interesting aspects of the war that are still not fully appreciated. One is the story, which only surfaced in the 1990s, of the Japanese spies who radioed Canadian naval movements from local fishing boats along the west coast of British Columbia. It was a significant spy activity that ceased only with the deportation of the West Coast Japanese population. The Japanese also launched 9,000 balloons loaded with incendiary bombs from Japan. They drifted on the jet stream, some landing as far east as northeastern Ontario and others causing mayhem on landing. One killed six people in Oregon.

Murray also illuminates the close shave that Australia had with a Japanese invasion through Darwin. His discussion of the confused nature of the internal politics of the Japanese surrender is interesting, too, with the light it sheds on the aftermath of the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The major criticism of this excel-

lent story of Canadian-Australian collaboration is that not one map is to be found in the entire book. This is an unfortunate oversight. Maps, along with much better production of the interesting, but badly reproduced, black-and-white photographs, would have contributed greatly to a reader's enjoyment of book. Otherwise, *The Invisible War* is a great read and a credit to its author.

Reviewed by **Peter St. John**, senior scholar, political studies, University of Manitoba.

Legally Louis

The distinguished Manitoba historian J.M. Bumsted is the latest author to try his hand at a biographical study of Louis Riel. He will not be the last. Riel's life and personality were so tragic and compelling that he will surely continue to be reinterpreted as long as Canadians have an interest in their history. Genuinely fresh approaches to a subject so intensely studied are nevertheless hard to come by. Bumsted's approach in ***Louis Riel v. Canada*** is to deny that he is writing a biography and assert instead that he is producing a study of the legal confrontations between Riel and the Canadian government. That does not mean that this is a legal history in the conventional sense; rather it is a brief for the defence. All this becomes clear at the end when the book finishes with a plea for a posthumous pardon. The book is an extended argument in favour of officially absolving Riel.

For any reader who is not passionately committed to a pardon for Riel, the results are unfortunate. Legal briefs generally make bad reading and worse history. The defence attorney's prime duty is to ensure that no detail supporting his client's case is overlooked and that his opponents' actions are presented in the worst possible light. In legal argument, as well, repetition is an important tool in making the case—and there is a lot of repetition in this book. Bumsted concentrates heavily on the Red River resistance and the creation of Manitoba because it is easier to defend Riel's actions for that period of his life. The result is a very lopsided account in which nine chapters cover the six years between 1869 and 1875, while the last decade of Riel's life is allotted only three. The trial of Ambroise Lépine, a minor participant in the "trial" of Thomas Scott, gets as much space as Riel's own. Bumsted believes that Riel's defence team in 1885 should have followed a strategy of blaming the government. He certainly does. All representatives of the Canadian government, and for that matter anyone at all who opposed Riel, are presented as incompetent or malicious or both.

Louis Riel v. Canada is inexpensive for a paperback of more than 300 pages. The publisher seems to have achieved this by saving money in several ways. There are no footnotes or bibliography, although an incomplete version of the latter is available on the publisher's website. There are only a few small illustrations, reproduced as cheaply as possible. There are no

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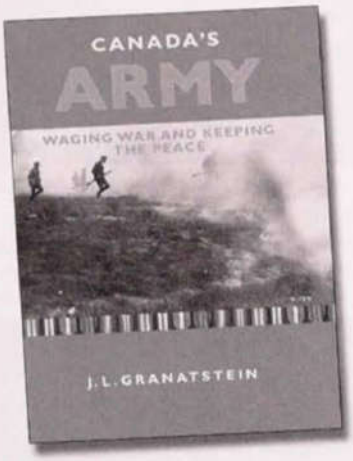

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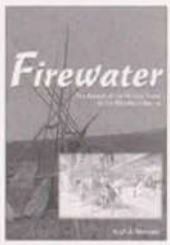

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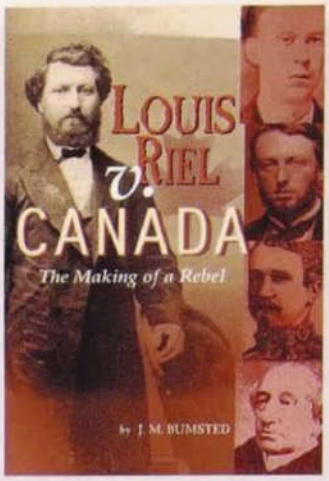
maps, even though it is very difficult for someone without a knowledge of the historical geography of Manitoba to make sense of the events of 1869–70. There is little evidence of editing, as the book is riddled with spelling errors, incomplete sentences, mangled quotations, and more or less serious errors of fact. The date of the transfer of the HBC territories to Canada is given as December 1, 1870 instead of 1869. General Middleton did not understand the Canadian militia because he "had only been a few months in Canada." In fact he had served in Canada from 1868 to 1870 and was married to a Canadian. The federal statute creating the NWMP in 1873 is identified as having been passed by the North West Territories Council.



If you yearn for the glory days of the Berkeley student movement and have an urge to get your faded Che Guevara poster out of storage, you will probably like the book. The concluding epilogue contains the following statement that pretty much sums up the spirit of the work: "In the largest sense of all, of course, Riel does not have to symbolize resistance to anything in particular, but simply a spirit of rebellion and protest, of willingness to stand up and oppose the illegitimate exploitation of self and community by the system and even by the inexorable forces of history." Truly, revolution for the hell of it. ◙

Rod Macleod is a professor in the department of history and classics at the University of Alberta and author of *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster* (University of Alberta Press, 2001).

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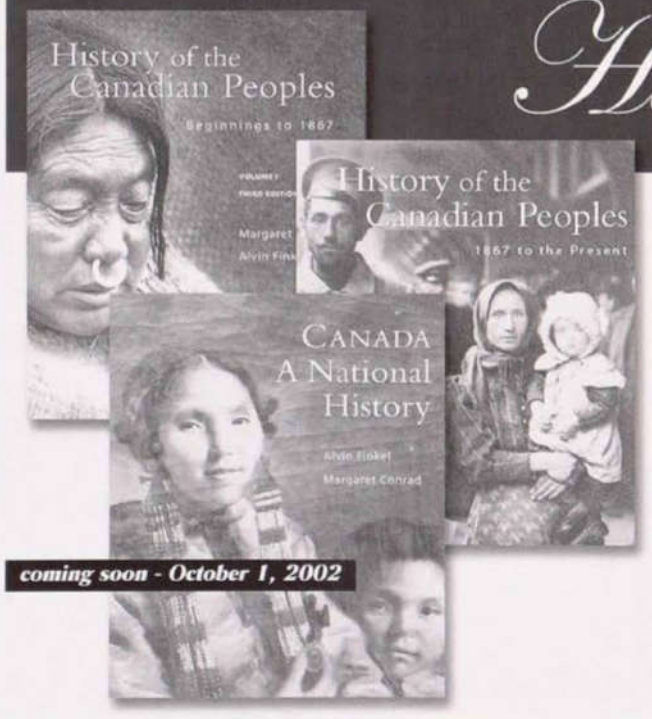

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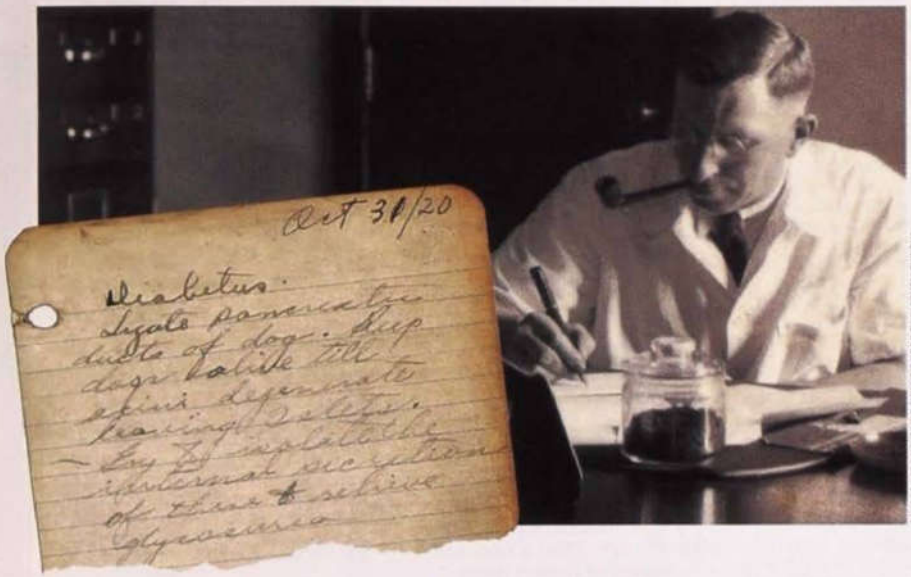

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At two o'clock in the morning of October 31, 1920, Dr. Frederick Banting, a London, Ontario surgeon, was suddenly struck by an idea after reading a routine article on the pancreas. He scribbled it into his notebook:

> *Diabetus*
> *Ligate pancreatic ducts of dog. Keep dogs alive till acini degenerate leaving Islets. Try to isolate the internal secretion of these to relieve glycosurea.*

It was misspelled and even physiologically inaccurate, but this idea, while virtually incomprehensible to the lay public, may have saved your life. The discovery of insulin, one of the most dramatic moments in medical history, began with this late-night entry in Dr. Banting's notebook.

Banting was an unlikely medical visionary. Scientists had been puzzling over sugar diabetes for centuries; certainly they never would have guessed that culmination of their efforts would be realized by a small-time Canadian doctor with a foundering practice and minimal knowledge of the disease.

By 1920, physiologists knew that the dark mystery of sugar diabetes (*diabetes mellitis*) remained locked in the pancreas. A diabetic pancreas is unable to effectively produce the hormone needed to convert food into energy, resulting in harmful and often lethal accumulations of sugar in the bloodstream. Physiologists speculated that if this energy-producing secretion could somehow be collected and introduced into a diseased organism, diabetes could be treated, or maybe even cured. The central problem—one that continued to beriddle scientists throughout the world—was how to isolate and extract this secretion. Banting proposed a new variation on past unsuccessful methods: trapping the substance by ligating, or blocking, the pancreatic ducts and allowing the pancreas to degenerate.

He took his idea to illustrious Scottish physiologist, Professor J.J.R. MacLeod at the University of Toronto, who afforded him a brief interview. MacLeod was initially unimpressed by Banting, but was sufficiently convinced of the academic value of Banting's proposed study to provide the young doctor with a laboratory, a research assistant, and a kennel of dogs as test animals.

In the summer of 1921, while Professor MacLeod vacationed in Scotland, Banting and his newly appointed assistant, a young medical student, Charles H. Best, began a series of crude but nonetheless remarkable experiments. Banting and Best found that their duct-ligated pancreas extract dramatically reduced the blood-sugar levels of diabetic dogs. In one experiment, the two researchers completely amputated the pancreas of one test dog, Marjorie, and found their new serum could keep her alive and well. It seemed incredible.

When Professor MacLeod returned from his holiday, he found Banting and Best thrilled by their spectacular results. Still skeptical, MacLeod encouraged further tests, and, as Banting and Best had been unable to adequately control the purity of their extract, they brought in University of Alberta biochemist James B. Collip to filter out the impurities for clinical use. The result of all of this work culminated in the winter of 1921–22 with the discovery of insulin.

The first human ever to receive insulin was a severely diabetic fourteen-year-old Toronto boy, Leonard Thompson. Diagnosed in 1919, Thompson was on the brink of death by 1922: bone-white skin, sunken stomach, hair falling out—a lethargic skeletal husk of a boy. On January 23, Thompson was injected with a dose of insulin. Within twenty-four hours, his blood-sugar levels had miraculously plummeted from .520 to .120. As the scientists noted in their 1922 report, "The boy became brighter, more active, looked better and said he felt stronger." A doomed life had been saved.

With the instant and spectacular triumph of insulin, Banting and MacLeod became, in 1923, the first Canadians to attain the Nobel Prize for medicine, sharing their award evenly with Best and Collip. It is estimated that there are literally millions of diabetics living today who would have died prematurely were it not for the breakthrough of the Toronto doctors. From the 2 a.m. revelation of a shy Ontario surgeon to international life-saving glory, the discovery of insulin remains one of the rare, genuinely miraculous moments in the history of both Canada and the human race. ◘

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MAGGIE SIGGINS

Encounter

She was far more than the progenitor of Louis Riel. Marie-Anne Lagimodière embodied the spirit and strength of the North West, says author Maggie Siggins.

I can picture that winter night in 1805. It's freezing and the snow is piled high. The windows of St. Joseph Church hall in the village of Maskinongé near Trois-Rivières are frosted. Inside, Marie-Anne Gaboury is savouring the soirée. By everyone's account she is gorgeous, with a lovely petite figure, bright blue eyes, and fair hair. And yet something of an oddity, for here she is already twenty-five years old and not married. Family legend has it that she was so lively and quick-witted that life with a dull farmer didn't appeal to her. This cold night, though, she will finally fall madly in love.

Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière must have cut a dashing figure – dark and good-looking, with the muscular build of a woodsman, and dressed in a buckskin jacket, moccasins beautifully beaded, a *capote* of caribou skin, and an otter-skin cap. At twenty-one, he had hired on as a voyageur for the North West Company, but over the ensuing years he had developed into an expert hunter of bison and trapper of beaver. That night he spun tales of incredible adventure. Marie-Anne must have thought him wildly romantic, for a few months later, in April 1806, the couple were married.

Marie-Anne Lagimodière is pegged in history books as Louis Riel's grandmother, but that's not what intrigues me most about her. More fascinating was her decision to follow her fur-trapping husband into Canada's Wild West. It wasn't unusual in Quebec for a well-brought-up, religiously devout young woman to marry a man of the woods. He would go off to do his hunting and trapping, and she would remain at home bringing up the children that resulted from his infrequent visits, preserving his link with church and "civilization." But Marie-Anne would not hear of such a thing. Head-strong and spirited, she would become the first white woman from the Canadas to take on the incredibly arduous existence that was the fur trapper's life.

There was hardly a dull moment in Marie-Anne's long life. During the journey from Trois-Rivières to Red River, the brigade encountered two wild storms while crossing Lake Superior. One canoe tipped over and several men drowned, but fortunately the Lagimodières survived. For years Marie-Anne talked about the terror of that trip.

When they arrived at the buffalo-hunting grounds near Pembina, she was horrified to discover that her husband already had a wife. As was the custom among white fur trappers, Jean-Baptiste had lived with a native woman and had three daughters by her. She naturally resented Marie-Anne, and the story goes that she tried to poison her. History does not record how Jean-Baptiste explained his predicament to either of his wives, or their response to him.

Since the Red River valley was overtrapped, the Lagimodières moved to Fort Edmonton where they lived for three years. Even in these wilds, Marie-Anne insisted on accompanying her husband on the buffalo hunts and trapping lines. She became a superb horsewoman. Often a papoose would be strapped to the side of a horse, counterweighted by supplies on the other, for Marie-Anne had three babies in five years. On one occasion she and the children were kidnapped by Sarcee, who intended to hold them hostage until the safe return of their warriors from Fort Edmonton. Somehow Marie-Anne and the babies escaped, but it took five days at full gallop to reach the safety of Fort Edmonton.

In 1812, with a fourth child about to be born, the Lagimodières moved back to Red River, by that time a thriving village of several hundred families. Jean-Baptiste would continue fur trapping and buffalo hunting; eventually he would become a farmer and businessman. Marie-Anne finally had to settle down, "to dig a potato garden" as she put it. She would give birth to three more children, including the dark-haired beauty, Julie, who would become Louis Riel's mother.

What intrigues me most about her was her decision to follow her fur-trapping husband into Canada's Wild West.

Marie-Anne lived to be ninety-five years old. Never did she have an opportunity to return to her home in Quebec. The question I'd ask if I encountered her: Was that hunk worth it all? My guess is she'd quickly respond yes. ◘

Marie Lagimodière and her husband meeting the First Nations of eastern Canada. From *La Premier Canadienne du Nord-Ouest*, by Abbé G. Dugast.

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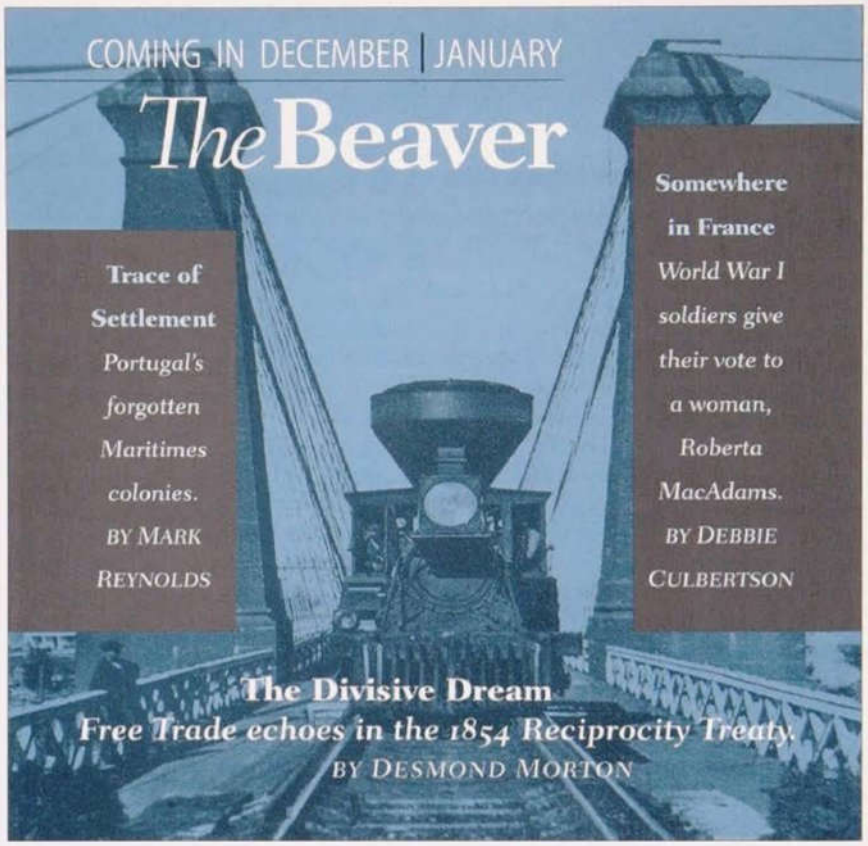
Maggie Siggins is the author of eight books, including *Riel: A Life of Revolution*.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Six Recipients Selected for National Honour

Six Canadian-history teachers, deemed the best in the country by a national panel of judges, have been selected to receive the prestigious 2002 Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. They will be recognized for their exceptional work by Her Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, at a November 16 ceremony at Rideau Hall.

The recipients' award-winning lesson plans, teaching strategies, initiatives, and innovations will appear on the Society website later this year to be shared with teachers across the country.

Canada's National History Society established the Governor General's Award in 1995–1996 to celebrate good history teachers. What began as a two-tier system of one recipient and twelve finalists has become an all-recipient format as of this year. Each of the six recipients receives an all-expense paid trip for two to Ottawa to attend the ceremony. As well, each receives a medal, a certificate, a cash prize of $2,500, and a further $1,000 for each of their schools, thanks to the generosity of **Bell Canada**, which underwrites the prize portion of the program.

The **Hudson's Bay History Foundation** and **Bell Canada** have been faithful sponsors of the Award since its inception. Their support is greatly appreciated.

The Recipients

Josette Bouchard-Muller (Toronto French School, Toronto, ON) has also taught at the Mistassini Cree Reserve, where she lived for three years. She has written "Le Canada and le monde du XVIIème siècle à 1914," designed to situate Canada in a global context, and "Colonisation du Sud de l'Ontario

XIXème siècle: Sandford Farm," a study / field-trip unit focusing on settlement in southern Ontario.

Barbara Brockmann (Fisher Park Public School, Ottawa, ON) sees Canadian history as a critical cornerstone in helping her multicultural, inner-city students find a place in their classes, families, neighbourhoods, and country. Integrating history with language arts, drama, and geography, she has created student-centred projects including "Collecting Oral History," "Equity Gameboards," and "Letter from the Attic: Memories of World War I."

Nick Brune (Iroquois Ridge High School, Cambridge, ON) is an accomplished writer. He has published over fifty newspaper articles, written and evaluated Ministry of Education history correspondence courses, cowritten history textbooks and videos, written a teaching package for the Dominion Institute, and coedited *Rapport*, the Ontario history and social science journal.

John Jamieson (Nuiyak School, Sanikiluaq, NU) teaches outside the box. His teaching is not based on any existing curriculum – he teaches and preserves history that is unrecorded and not yet fully explored. His submission represents twenty years of work with Inuit students in an isolated community in the Belcher Islands in Hudson's Bay.

Ken Marland (Buena Vista School, Saskatoon, SK) has attempted throughout his career to create experiences for students of all grades that pass along his own love of history. He has published two teacher resources, "The Bison: A Journal of Discovery" and "Signal Hill: A Community Study of St. John's, Newfoundland," and developed a miniature stamp album of Saskatoon to help children learn about their local history.

Carol White (Calvin Park Public School, Kingston, ON) brings Canadian history to life for her grade-eight students through extensive use of simulations, multimedia, and innovative teaching methods. Integrating technology into the curriculum and local history into the ministry guidelines are integral parts of her approach to making Canadian history relevant and interesting.

It's a Surprise Party – and You're Invited!

Charles Baillie, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the TD Bank, will host the Society to announce the 2002 Pierre Berton Award winner inside the TD's private reception rooms on the fifty-fourth floor of the TD Tower in Toronto. Built by Mies van der Rohe nearly thirty-five years ago, the venue has a unique history of its own, and is often a destination for research by budding architects. *Beaver* readers are invited to join us for an informal dinner Tuesday, October 22 in this landmark space, and to celebrate this year's innovative contributor to the popularization of Canadian history. Tickets are $150 each and eligible for a charitable tax receipt. For more information contact our offices: 1-800-816-6777, or mail your cheque, payable to Canada's National History Society, to 478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6.

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A discount of at least 10 percent on regular admission will be given upon presentation of your membership card. Some restrictions may apply. All subscribers to the *Beaver* are automatically members of the Society.

Artifact

In the 1940s, thousands of Saskatchewan residents in rural areas lived without ready access to emergency medical services.

Enter the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance Service, the first nonmilitary air ambulance service in North America.

The Norseman Mark V airplane CF-SAM was one of two airplanes purchased by the Saskatchewan government for the fledgling air ambulance service in 1946. Though it was sometimes forced to land in farmers' fields when no proper landing strips were available, it provided quick, reliable transportation to more than two hundred and fifty patients in its first year of operation.

The Canadian-designed Norseman CF-SAM was built by Canadian Car & Foundry in St. Laurent, Quebec. A single 600 HP radial engine powered this 9.75-metre-long fabric-covered plane. It had seating room for ten, but was adapted to accommodate patients and crew. Its wheels could be replaced with floats or skis as conditions required.

The Air Ambulance Service replaced CF-SAM with Cessna aircraft three years later and CF-SAM was sold. For the next twenty-five years it flew charters, hauled freight, carried smoke-jumpers, and patrolled for forest fires, living up to its nickname "the two-ton truck of the air."

In 1982, Canada Post featured the plane on its sixty-cent stamp.

CF-SAM is currently on exhibit at the Moose Jaw branch of the Saskatchewan Western Development Museum.

The Saskatchewan Western Development Museum has four exhibit branches located in Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Saskatoon, and Yorkton.

For more information contact:
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CHRISTOPHER **Moore**

Revisiting Bennett's British Columbia

When I was a kid, we lived in Nelson in the Kootenays of British Columbia, and once in a while we would drive to Ainsworth to swim at the hot springs. They had a heated outdoor swimming pool, but for real adventure kids waded into the cave behind the pool, the cave that ran deep into the mountain where the hot water emerged. Temperatures rose fiercely as we advanced into the cave through a series of planked pools. It was steamy and dark and hot. In the cave's furthest recesses, there were sometimes huge Russian-speaking women floating ominously in the deepest pool like parboiled walruses. We'd retreat; it was alarming and exciting.

The other adventure was getting there. Ainsworth clings to the side of a near-vertical mountain, with Kootenay Lake down below. In those days, the road was rough and narrow, an unpaved track bulldozed out of the hillside and twisting like a line on B.C.'s topographical maps. The driver sat right up against the cliff face; riders on the passenger side looked out on an abyss. If we met another car at one of the hairpin corners, someone backed up to the nearest widening of the road. Going to Ainsworth, we didn't know the meaning of "boring car trip."

We took our own kids back there this summer, and it is still some trip. As a kid, I probably never appreciated the beauty of the region. Today's Ainsworth is a pleasant resort busy with tourists. The hot springs cave is not quite as spooky as I remembered.

But today there is a comfortable highway with engineered corners and lots of passing lanes. We took in the glorious view without worrying about dropping off into it. The difference between today's Ainsworth road and the road I remember is the legacy of William Andrew Cecil Bennett.

This year marked fifty years since W.A.C. Bennett won a provincial election in 1952, launching his twenty-year reign as premier of British Columbia. There are not many provincial premiers worth remembering fifty years on. But everywhere we drove or sailed in B.C. this summer, I found myself thinking about him and the province he made.

There was B.C. before there was Bennett, of course. Even little Ainsworth, in the remote southeastern corner of the province, thrived more than a century ago. Back then, railroads and sternwheelers linked mining towns all over the Kootenays. Still, the subtitle of David J. Mitchell's biography of Bennett has a powerful point. Mitchell called his book *W.A.C.: Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*. By the time Bennett lost an election in 1972, B.C. had risen into a different condition than it had known in 1952.

W.A.C. Bennett was born in New Brunswick in 1900 and got into business in Edmonton. In 1930, he moved his family to B.C. and became a hardware merchant in Kelowna. It took four days to drive from Vancouver to Kelowna in those days. (You can do it in a long afternoon now.) In twenty years, he was wealthy and ready to become premier.

W.A.C. Bennett in 1952.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

David Mitchell's biography suggests Bennett's vision for British Columbia was simple. The province was full of resources; business ought to make the most of them. The problem in 1952 was getting at them. In 1952, you might say, all the province's roads were like the road to Ainsworth was. If we drove to Vancouver in the mid-1950s, we took a long detour down through the States. Bennett spent twenty years putting an end to that.

At Bennett's command, lousy roads were transformed into a highway sys-

tem that tamed the mountains. A fleet of ferries began to ply the coastal waterways and inland lakes. Bennett talked free enterprise, but when business proved too cautious, he had the province take over the ferry system and expanded it mightily. He took over the provincial railroad and extended it northward. He took over the electric company and made it his vehicle for developing hydro dams and transmission lines on a continental scale.

B.C.'s was still a resource economy: two-by-fours by the carload, fish in bulk, raw minerals, and raw power. But suddenly those resources were available for exploitation as never before, and B.C. prospered. Bennett was personally abstemious, but he gloried in his province's material prosperity. The Good Life, he called it, and it marked the limits of his ambitions for the province. The more complicated social challenges of the 1970s defeated him. But he'd put an end to my childhood adventures on scary dirt roads to inaccessible places.

It's still a good life; we had a great time visiting B.C. But Bennett's system is frayed at the edges. In his day, British Columbians could live well on mass production and bulk exports. Today, lots of other parts of the world produce competing bulk products for a lower standard of living. The forest industry struggles with more than George Bush's tariffs. Fishing boats rot at anchor. Mining seems almost dead.

Nelson, my old hometown, is no bigger now than in my day, W.A.C. Bennett's day. One of the highways bypassed it, and the forest-products mill has closed. But the old Nelson never had sidewalk cafés all along Baker Street, never knew its architecture was "heritage," did not have the bookshops and the outdoor-equipment stores.

The ferries still run, and the roads are better than ever. W.A.C. Bennett would smile and say, "My friend, prosperity is here to stay!" He always had lots of confidence.

David J. Mitchell's *W.A.C.: Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, was published in 1983 and is out of print. Still available, in Ainsworth at least, is *High Grade and Hot Springs* by E.L. Affleck, published in 2001 by the Ainsworth Hot Springs Historical Society.

For more information about Christopher Moore, visit <www.christophermoore.ca>.

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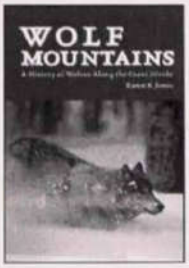

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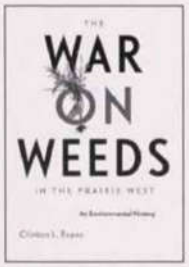

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Album

Tom Dennison, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is a retired teacher living in St. Catharines, Ontario. The picture was found among the effects of his grandfather, William Dennison, who died in 1930.

Deer Hunters Each fall after Thanksgiving, around the turn of the last century, the Dennison men of Walton, Ontario, and the Dowswell men of Thamesville – brothers and cousins, farmers all – would take the train north to Parry Sound, then head off into the bush, to an abandoned lumber camp. It was more than a chance to relax after the toil of the harvest and engage in some male camaraderie. For these ever-practical pioneers, it was a way to fill their families' larders for the coming winter. The Dennisons and Dowswells were engaged in that most ancient of masculine tasks – hunting – and white-tailed deer where loggers had cleared Ontario's primeval forest grew fat and plentiful. After they had made their kill and hung and dressed the carcasses, they would haul the booty back home on the train. The venison would keep well into the next year surrounded by sawdust-covered ice blocks in root cellars dug into hillsides. And so, another Canadian winter could be passed in plenty.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478 – 167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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7:30 AM							
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8:30 AM	ODYSSEYS						
9:00 AM	CANADIAN ANTHOLOGIES						
9:30 AM	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY	GREATEST JOURNEYS	GREAT TRAIN STORIES	SEA HUNTERS	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY		
10:00 AM	HISTORYLANDS					HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
10:30 AM	STREETS OF THE WORLD						
11:00 AM	THE CANADIANS						
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM	TOUR OF DUTY						
12:30 PM							
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4:00 PM	ODYSSEYS						
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5:00 PM	COMBAT (TO NOV. 9)					THE CANADIANS	WAR SERIES
5:30 PM	THE UNTOUCHABLES						
6:00 PM	HISTORYLANDS					KINGS AND QUEENS (ROYALTY ANTHOLOGY)	GHOST TOWNS
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7:00 PM	TOUR OF DUTY					GHOST TOWNS	HISTORY'S COURTROOM (OCT. 13)
7:30 PM						THE JOURNEY HOME	
8:00 PM	CANADIAN ANTHOLOGIES					THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC HOUR	CHIEFS (SEPT. 29 FOR 5 WEEKS)
8:30 PM	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY	GREATEST JOURNEYS	GREAT TRAIN STORIES	SEA HUNTERS	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY		
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9:30 PM							
10:00 PM							
10:30 PM							
11:00 PM	CHINA BEACH						
11:30 PM							
12:00 AM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
12:30 AM							
1:00 AM							
1:30 AM							
2:00 AM	CHINA BEACH						
2:30 AM							
3:00 AM	TOUR OF DUTY					THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC HOUR	CHIEFS (SEPT. 29 FOR 5 WEEKS)
3:30 AM							
4:00 AM	CANADIAN ANTHOLOGIES					WESTERN MATINEE	HISTORY'S COURTROOM (OCT. 13)
4:30 AM	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY	GREATEST JOURNEYS	GREAT TRAIN STORIES	SEA HUNTERS	DISASTERS OF THE CENTURY		
5:00 AM	PAID PROGRAMMING						GHOST TOWNS
5:30 AM							THE JOURNEY HOME
6:00 AM	COMBAT (TO NOV. 9)						CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM
6:30 AM	THE UNTOUCHABLES						

Program changes may occur.